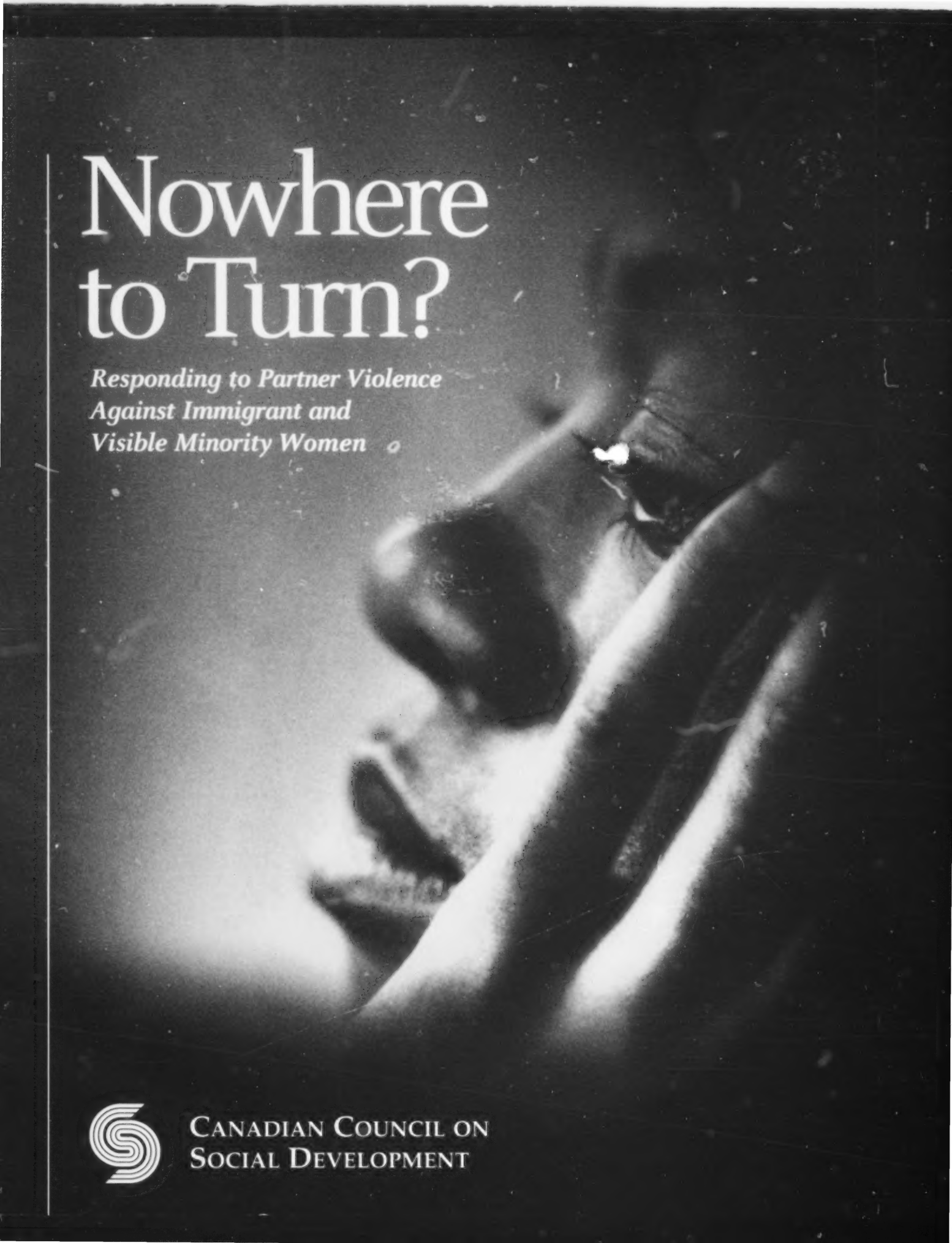

Nowhere to Turn?

Responding to Partner Violence Against Immigrant and Visible Minority Women

CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Nowhere to Turn?

Responding to Partner Violence Against Immigrant and Visible Minority Women

Submitted to the Department of Justice,
Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD)

Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD)
309 Cooper St., 5th Floor, Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5
◆ Phone: 613-236-8977 ◆ Fax: 613-236-2750
◆ Internet: www.ccsd.ca ◆ E-mail: council@ccsd.ca

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And thanks to all the focus group participants. They showed dedication and interest, and generously shared their time, knowledge and experiences.

Let us continue to work together to make a difference in the lives of immigrant and visible minority women!

Executive Summary

"The result of this project should be pressure for action."
Focus group participant, from *Voices of Frontline Workers*

Comprehensive, coordinated and culturally appropriate strategies are needed to reach out to immigrant and visible minority women in Canada who are abused by their husbands or partners. This study by the Canadian Council on Social Development identifies a complex set of issues, attitudes, barriers and gaps in service that make immigrant and visible minority women uniquely vulnerable when faced by domestic violence.

This study emphasizes the importance of:

- providing information on Canadian laws, rights and services to immigrants in their own language and increasing the availability of professional interpretation services for police, courts, crisis centres and other services;
- ensuring that services for abused immigrant and visible minority women are sensitive to and respectful of diverse cultural practices, histories and life experiences;
- improving and coordinating access to crisis programs (e.g. shelters, counselling) and longer-term interventions (e.g. housing, training) tailored to the needs of this population;
- stabilizing funding for immigrant settlement and ethno-cultural service agencies, and encouraging more collaboration among mainstream and culturally specific service providers; and,
- engaging in education and equity strategies aimed at reducing discrimination, stereotyping and marginalization of immigrant and visible minority communities and preventing partner abuse.

The study findings are based on focus groups with frontline workers from community organizations in seven cities across the country (Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax), a two-day National Forum, key informant interviews, and a review of relevant literature and available data.

The project, funded by the Department of Justice Canada under the Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development program within the Voluntary Sector Initiative, set out to deepen understanding of the factors involved in partner abuse experienced by immigrant and visible minority women, and to identify effective ways to support victims and reduce the incidence of partner violence.

A Shared Problem

Partner violence is defined as controlling or abusive behaviour by a spouse or common law partner. It can take many forms, including physical or sexual violence, verbal, psychological, emotional, financial or spiritual abuse.

Partner violence occurs in all societies and cultures. Addressing this issue as it affects immigrant and visible minority communities recognizes that they are a growing segment of the population. In 2001, there were almost four million people or 13.4% of the population who identified themselves as visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2003). Most visible minorities are immigrants (68%).

In Canada, nearly one woman in three is victimized in her own home. The study found that victimization rates among immigrant and visible minority women in a 1999 Statistics Canada survey were somewhat lower than other women (10.5% of immigrant and visible minority women experienced emotional or financial abuse, compared to 14% of other women; 4.2% cited physical or sexual abuse, compared to 6.2% of other women). However, the study notes that because the survey was done only in English and French, it was not representative of women who were not proficient in either official language.

The survey data also showed that few women in either category reported the abuse to police (10% for immigrant and visible minority women vs. 12% for other women). Other women, however, were more likely to seek help from services (21% vs. 17%), such as counselling.

Unique Vulnerabilities

Immigrant and visible minority women have many of the same experiences as other women who suffer abuse. They share feelings of fear and shame. They often cling to the hope that their partner can be convinced to stop the abuse. They want to protect their children. They are not sure whom they can trust with this problem.

But there are also unique vulnerabilities in this population. For example, the women may not speak either of Canada's official languages. And as one frontline worker said: "How can women who cannot speak English call 9-1-1?" They may not be familiar with their rights in Canada, or the way law enforcement and the court systems work. It was reported that many women fear being deported by immigration authorities if they talk about abuse. They may be deliberately misinformed about their rights and status by the abusive partner.

These women can be incredibly isolated in an unfamiliar environment where there seems to be no safe place, not even at home. The loss of traditional supports of extended family, friends and advisors from their country of origin weighs heavily on some of these women and compounds their isolation. Some wives have never experienced abuse until they come here, when the trauma of adjusting economically and socially to the new country disrupts family life. Other families come from societies which believe that the man is entitled to dominate and physically "discipline" his wife.

Many ethnocultural communities are small and tight-knit in Canadian cities. Depending on attitudes, some women who leave an abusive situation may be cut off from their whole community.

Immigrant and visible minority women may find that escaping from abuse means a passport to poverty for themselves and their children. While other abused women may experience economic problems too, immigrant and visible minority women may run into particular roadblocks in the workplace – for example, if their foreign credentials and work experience are not recognized in Canada.

No Quick and Easy Answers

There are no quick and easy answers. The study notes that the issues facing immigrant and visible minority women who suffer abuse are complex and multi-faceted. Therefore, the solutions must be comprehensive and holistic. They involve justice, law enforcement and human services, and require cooperation and coordination by different agencies and systems.

Information and Language Services

These women need good information that they can understand. Ideally, they should get information about their rights and Canadian laws when they arrive in the country, as part of the immigration process. They also need information about where to go for help. "They have no idea where to go for help," one frontline worker said. "They are overwhelmed by feelings of helplessness."

To talk about abuse, they need to communicate with someone they can trust, in what one observer called their "language of comfort." The study identifies language barriers and the unavailability of professional interpretation services in a variety of settings and systems as a key concern.

> "You could see a woman for two or three years. She could be beaten every time before her appointment, but you would not be told that because her partner is interpreting for her. Only professional interpretation should be used." (Focus Group Participant)

Law Enforcement and the Courts

The service systems in Canada, particularly the law enforcement and justice systems, are often intimidating for abused women from immigrant and visible minority communities. There were many comments about the need to help women through the process so they can better understand and cope with what is happening to them. "Abused women should be red-flagged in the court system so that they can be given the supports they need. This would encourage more women to go through the process," said a frontline worker.

Better information and language services would help, but changes in practices were also suggested. Some of these practices are already in place in some jurisdictions:

- dedicated family violence police units and courts;
- proactive victims' services to help immigrant and visible minority women through the judicial system;
- increased efforts to sensitize police and court personnel to these issues;

- changes in legal aid eligibility to ensure that these women can get legal assistance for separation and child custody matters.

A particular concern that emerged from the study was the practice of cross-charging or dual-charging. A frontline worker explained the problem this way:

> "Often, the woman has experienced violence many times before she calls the police. She has gone through it so often, and finally, she might pick up a coffee cup, for example, and she gets charged with assault with a weapon. He just used his fists, so he gets a lesser charge of common assault. But these women need help, not charges."

Crisis and Longer-term Assistance

A shortage of culturally appropriate crisis intervention services, such as shelters and counselling for abused women was identified. Longer-term assistance to help the women get on their feet and make a stable and safe home for themselves and their children – such as income support, affordable housing, and job training – are considered inadequate or inaccessible.

There were stories about women going back to an abusive situation for economic reasons. One focus group participant spoke of "empowering" a woman with children to make her own decision to leave an abusive relationship. The woman did not have a job, so she had to go on social assistance.

> "She called me to say 'I think I have to go back. The neighbourhood, the building where I am living, there are fights at my door and people are screaming in the middle of the night, broken bottles and blood. My children are more scared than they were before.' You feel so powerless because what can you do? There should be safe, affordable housing for her and her children."

Community agencies want to provide appropriate services and build trusting relationships with immigrant and visible minority women, but there are financial constraints. Ethnocultural and minority women's groups feel they must scramble for whatever funding is left over after mainstream agencies receive their share. A focus group participant said:

> "I don't want to take those mainstream programs away, but there has to be some recognition of the changing needs. Money has to be matched with the demographic shifts. We are the marginalized groups, so we end up in the very strange situation of being forced to compete with each other for scarce funds."

Organizations of all kinds in the voluntary sector are struggling to stretch limited resources as far as possible and seeking opportunities to be innovative. There is some potential seen by agencies serving immigrant and visible minority women and mainstream agencies to maximize resources and improve accessibility to services through greater collaboration.

Education, Equity and Awareness

The study identifies a role for public education to help prevent abuse – but not necessarily big advertising campaigns. For many ethnocultural communities, there may be more promise in small, neighbourhood gatherings where people can talk about their backgrounds and their new life in Canada.

There is also a role for schools to teach young people that physical violence by a spouse is a crime, and that all people are entitled to live free of abuse of all kinds, including emotional abuse.

Public education can also play a role in creating a fairer and more accepting environment for immigrants to Canada. Frontline workers said that some women are reluctant to speak out about abuse because they feel it will bring more harm to a community that is already suffering from systemic racism. Prevailing attitudes of mainstream society are perceived as part of the problem. "The issue of racism has to be flagged all over the place."

> "Immigrants are treated as the 'other.' They want to be perceived as individuals and treated with respect like everyone else and not lumped into the category of immigrant."

The study also encourages equity and gender-based analysis of legislation, policies and programs to assess the differential impacts on immigrant and visible minority women.

Looking Ahead

The National Forum that was part of this study revealed that there are service providers across the country, from both mainstream agencies and those serving specific cultural or immigrant communities, who are interested in building community coalitions and provincial and national networks to help tackle these issues. One Forum participant put it this way:

> "As always, I am so impressed by all the great work being done across the country in small agencies to bring about change in their individual communities (on very little funding). I believe that we can all benefit from learning about the many creative initiatives and approaches that are being developed out there and that we can integrate them into the work of our agencies."

More than 70 organizations participated in this study. To continue the dialogue they began and to maintain momentum to work for change, the CCSD is beginning the process of building a national network that will promote:

- sharing of knowledge and best practices;
- culturally appropriate, high-quality service delivery; and
- the development of guidelines and strategies to improve coordination and foster collaboration within and across service systems.

This study poses challenges for the justice, immigration and human services systems, all levels of government, and community agencies and organizations, including ethnocultural groups, to help improve Canada's response to partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women. It also suggests a role for Canadians in general – to critically examine their attitudes to visible minorities and immigrants, with a view to building a more inclusive society.

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to study partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women and develop recommendations for appropriate actions, policies, and ongoing relationships among minority communities, the justice system and the voluntary sector. This project addresses policy priorities of the Department of Justice, through the Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD) initiative, namely policy priorities concerning family violence, equality, diversity and access to justice. Work under this project is also linked with identified priorities of the RCMP (learning about diversity), Solicitor General Canada (victims and diversity in the offender population), and Status of Women Canada (eliminating violence against women).

Goals and Objectives

The goals of the project were to develop a deeper understanding of the nature and causes of partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women, identify recommendations for actions to ensure support for victims through access to community services and the justice system, and to promote services that will be responsive to the needs of an evolving and diverse population.

Specific objectives of the project included the following:

1. To further understand the key issues by undertaking survey-based quantitative research and a literature review on patterns and causes of violence against immigrant and visible minority women in Canada.
2. To increase awareness about specific needs in this area through community consultations, workshops and seminars with minority community groups, social service agencies serving immigrant and visible minority groups, and service providers for victims of violence such as shelters and transition houses.
3. To understand the role of the criminal justice system and increase its capacity to respond to partner violence in immigrant and visible minority communities through discussion forums, educational initiatives, and the development of national and community networks of personnel working in the justice system, social service agencies and other community agencies that serve immigrant and visible minority families.
4. To help promote a coordinated response by service agencies and the justice system to the problem of partner violence in immigrant and visible minority communities.
5. To help promote proactive policies within the community to reduce partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women.

Methodology

This project incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including a review of relevant literature, analysis of a national survey, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and organization of a national forum.

Literature Review

Literature reviewed for this project included relevant books, reports, journals and magazine articles. Subheadings used to organize the material included the following terms: immigrants; visible minorities; violence against women; Canadian context of violence against women; perceptions of partner violence; and partner violence in ethnic communities.

The literature reviewed indicates that immigrant and visible minority women who have experienced abuse face a very complicated challenge. Their problem – while serious in and of itself – is further compounded by several factors, including their immigration status and the social, cultural, linguistic, racial and legal environment in which they find themselves. The resulting situation is too-often characterized by economic marginalization, racism and sexism.

Literature on wife abuse in ethnic and immigrant communities primarily includes reports commissioned by governments to identify service gaps, or reports initiated by community-based groups to demonstrate the unmet needs in this area. The reports by community groups, in particular, have contributed greatly to our knowledge of wife abuse in immigrant and visible minority communities by documenting the gaps in services for these women and highlighting the potential capacity of community-based organizations to offer culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services (Agnew, 1998).

A common theme in the studies reviewed is a call for more comprehensive research on the prevalence, nature and characteristics of abuse, and the contributing factors (Miedema, 2000; Province of Nova Scotia, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998; West, 1997; Macleod and Shin, 1990). The need for ongoing education about partner violence is also frequently cited – information that is culturally appropriate and sensitive – as are calls to disseminate this information to women and their partners through appropriate outlets within ethno-cultural communities.

The literature also talks about the need for support services in the voluntary sector – in particular, shelters and counselling services – and for personnel in the justice system – including the police, court workers, probation officers, and prison officers – to attain greater cultural competency in this area, through closer networking and partnerships with ethno-cultural communities. This would ensure that immigrant and visible minority women who experience partner abuse can access services that are more appropriate to their needs, and that the patterns and determinants of violence in specific communities are better understood.

General Social Survey (GSS) 1999: Cycle 13, Victimization

This project also examined empirical data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) 1999, Cycle 13 on victimization, in order to determine the nature and prevalence of partner violence among immigrant and visible minority women.

The GSS covers all persons aged 15 and older in Canada, excluding residents of the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and full-time residents in institutions. The survey sample of 26,000 included 14,269 women and 11,607 men. To select the data sample, each of the 10 provinces was divided into geographic areas and sample-size targets were set for each. Each of the cities included in this project for focus groups – Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax – was classified as a geographic area in the GSS.

Respondents to the GSS were interviewed in the official language of their choice; interviews by proxy were not allowed. The survey was carried out between February and December 1999. Survey questions related to partner violence covered any incidents of abuse that had occurred in the 12-month period or up to five years prior to the date of the survey interview.

This GSS (cycle 13) is the most current source of national-level data on partner violence among immigrant and visible minority women. For the analysis in this report, a sample of 13,341 women was selected from the total population surveyed, of which 4,120 were immigrant and visible minority women. From this sample group, 1,980 women who had reported some form of partner violence were selected for additional analysis. Of these, 504 were immigrant and visible minority women. Women who were neither immigrants nor members of a visible minority group were classified as "other women," and 1,476 such women reported experiencing some form of partner violence. Aboriginal women were excluded from the sample for this project.

Although the GSS provides information on women who have experienced partner abuse, several limitations in the survey must be noted when analyzing the data in relation to immigrant and visible minority women. These include the language of the interview, the data collection methods and the sensitive nature of the subject itself.

The GSS survey was conducted in Canada's two official languages: English and French. Women who were not proficient in either of these languages were therefore eliminated from the survey. As a result, a significant proportion of immigrant and visible minority women would not be represented in the survey sample.

The GSS relied on self-reports by respondents over the telephone as the sole data collection method. Women who were, or had been, in abusive relationships might not have wished to discuss their experiences with a stranger over the phone. For some – or perhaps, most women – their feelings about abusive relationships can be very delicate and require special sensitivity when discussing the subject. Some women may need the assurance of safety and privacy or counselling support before they are able to talk about their experiences. A survey with close-

ended questions could be seen as marginalizing a woman's experience of the abuse and could oversimplify its complex nature.

As well, there can be feelings of shame associated with the subject of abuse by an intimate partner, and for some women, their responses to survey questions can be influenced by feelings of guilt, powerlessness, embarrassment, personal failure, and a general mistrust of authority. The sensitive nature of this subject puts further limitations on the findings of the GSS.

Analysis of data from the GSS included calculations of frequencies, means and cross-tabulations. The analysis focused particularly on demographic profiles, perceptions of the police and the Canadian criminal system, and any experiences with partner violence. Additional analysis for this project also examined the relationship between demographic variables and experiences with partner violence.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions for this project were held in seven Canadian cities that have relatively large populations of immigrant and visible minority communities: Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. In each city, frontline workers from settlement agencies and social service groups were invited to discuss issues of common concern among their clientele of immigrant and visible minority women who had experienced partner abuse. The discussions focused on the nature of the problem and risk factors particular to this group, as well as suggestions for actions to improve existing services and supports, and ways to promote the development of other relevant and appropriate services.

In analyzing text data from the focus group discussions, "meaning units" (words or phrases to capture different ideas) were first identified, then further sorted into thematic areas and categorized. Tables were developed to illustrate the various categories, themes and meaning units, then the tables were analyzed for interpretation and to write up the findings. The broad categories included the following: immigration; access to justice; the police force; culture; and social services. The themes included the following: needs of women; factors contributing to vulnerability; major problems faced by frontline workers; and suggestions for action.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with 10 individuals from the cities involved in this study. These individuals were recruited from police services, Crown offices and other victims' support services. Key informants were asked to comment on what they saw as the problems faced by immigrant and visible minority women who have experienced violence, how their services provided support for such women, and the challenges they faced in providing this support.

Definition of Terms

Immigrant:

An immigrant is an individual who has acquired legal status to reside in Canada, including permanent residents, visitors and students. Some are recent immigrants (that is, in Canada for ten years or less), while others have resided in Canada for a long period of time (more than 10 years). The term "immigrant" also has a socially constructed meaning, "common-sense" usage referring to people of colour, people from developing countries, and individuals without official language proficiency (Miedema, 2000). Since some immigrants are Caucasian and are proficient in one of Canada's official languages, this definition obviously falls short in identifying all immigrants. For purposes of this study, the term "immigrant" refers to individuals who have immigrated to Canada, they have legal resident status and may be permanent residents, visitors, students or refugees.

Refugee:

Persons who have fled their country of origin due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

Visible minority:

The term as used in this study is based on the definition used by Statistics Canada, as defined by the Employment Equity Act. It refers to "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." Under this definition, regulations specify the following groups as visible minorities: Chinese, South Asians, Blacks, Arabs, West Asians, Filipinos, Southeast Asians, Latin Americans, Japanese, Koreans and other groups such as Pacific Islanders (Statistics Canada, 2003). In different surveys, people are asked to self-identify.

Non-visible minorities refers to persons who are not visible minorities and are not persons of Aboriginal origin. This is also self-identified.

Mainstream agencies:

This term refers to social service agencies that serve the general population without affiliation to a particular special interest, such as a focus on a particular ethnic or religious group. They usually provide some form of social, health, or financial support services, and examples would include social service centres and community health centres. These mainstream agencies are usually very well-established in their communities, with long histories of service and often with core funding that provides some financial stability for the agency.

Ethnic community organizations:

These are agencies which focus on providing services to immigrant and visible minority clients, such as settlement and integration services. The organizations are usually set up and run by other immigrants or members of visible minority groups, and some agencies are designed to serve a specific ethnic community. These organizations usually have a short history in Canada, they

often depend on unstable, short-term sources of funding, and rely heavily on volunteers to provide the services.

Partner violence:
This refers to controlling or abusive behaviour by a partner or spouse. It can take many forms, including physical violence as well as verbal, psychological, emotional, financial and spiritual abuse, or sexual violence and abuse. Women are most often the recipients or victims of partner violence. It can also be referred to as family violence, wife battering or assault, and domestic violence.

Review of the Literature

Immigration

According to the 2001 Census, the number of Canadians who were born outside of the country reached its highest level in 70 years. As of May 15, 2001, about five million people – or 18.4% of the total population – were born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Prior to 1961, the majority of immigrants to Canada came here from Europe (90.5%). Between 1971 and 1980, this had declined to 36%, and it dropped to 19.5% for the period 1991 to 2001. Over that same period, the number of immigrants coming from Asia grew from 3.2% prior to 1961, to 33% for the period 1971 to 1980, and to 58% from 1991 to 2001. People coming from the Caribbean and Central or South America made up 11% of all immigrants arriving in the 1990s – a reduction from the 16.5% recorded in the 1970s and 1980s. Immigration from Africa has also increased modestly: in the 1980s, they represented 6% of all immigrants; in the 1990s, this had grown to 8%. These shifts in the source countries of new immigrants to Canada reflect changes in Canada's immigration policies, as well as the results of international events.

Immigrants, especially recent immigrants, were more likely than Canadian-born citizens to live in large urban centres. According to the 2001 Census, 94% of people who immigrated in the 1990s lived in an urban area, whereas only 64% of the total population lived in urban centres (Statistics Canada, 2003). Cities with highest proportion of recent immigrants included Toronto (43%), Vancouver (18%), Montreal (12%), Ottawa-Hull (4%) and Calgary (4%). Only 6% of recent immigrants lived in rural areas.

As a result of changes in the source countries of immigrants, a growing proportion of recent immigrants spoke a language other than English or French most often at home. While 56% of immigrants who arrived in Canada in the 1980s spoke a non-official language at home, this had risen to 61% among immigrants who arrived in the 1990s.

Visible Minorities

The visible minority population is one of the fastest-growing segments of the population in Canada. In fact, since 1981, there has been a three-fold increase in the size of this group as a result of rising immigration from countries outside of Europe. In 1986, there were 1.6 million visible minorities in Canada; by 1991, this had grown to 2.5 million, and by 1996, there were 3.2

million (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2001). By 2001, almost 4 million people identified themselves as visible minorities – accounting for 13.4% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2003).

Members of the visible minority population in Canada belong to several different ethno-cultural groups. According to the Census data, the majority were identified as Chinese (26%). Other visible minority groups included people from South Asia (23%), Africa or the Caribbean (17%), Arab or West Asian (8%), the Philippines (8%), Latin America (5%), Southeast Asia (5%), Korea (3%), and Japan (2%). Other ethno-cultural groups constituted 2% of the visible minority population, and 1% belonged to more than one ethno-cultural group (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, January 21, 2003).

There are slightly more women (51%) than men in the visible minority population, just as is the case in the overall Canadian population. However, the gender composition is different among some visible minority groups. In 1996, for example, 58% of Filipino and 53% of the Japanese populations here were women, but only 45% of Arabs or West Asians and 49% of South Asians were women.

Most visible minorities are immigrants (68%). In 1996, 76% of Latin Americans living in Canada were immigrants (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2001). Among other visible minority groups, immigrants comprised 75% of Southeast Asians, 75% of Filipinos, 74% of Chinese, and 74% of Arab or West Asians. The two visible minority groups with lower compositions of immigrants included blacks (55%) and Japanese (21%).

Violence against Women

Many researchers recognize that violence against women is a pervasive and serious abuse of fundamental human rights (Krane, Oxman-Martinez and Ducey, 2000; Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998; Law Reform Committee of Nova Scotia, 1995). It occurs within the broader context of domestic violence and is also referred to as partner violence. Domestic violence has been described as a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another in order to get their own way (Silliman, 1995). The problem of domestic violence occurs in all societies, however, the nature of the problem varies, depending on the social structures and institutions of that society, as well as public awareness of and responses to domestic violence.

In liberal democratic societies, where the family is considered to be the basic building block of society, violence perpetrated by a man against his wife within the safe haven of their home is considered to be a tragedy (Mooney, 2000). In relationships – either historical or ongoing – violence against women can take several different forms, including physical or sexual assault, threats and intimidation, destruction of property, stalking, homicide, emotional or psychological abuse, or financial exploitation. The driving force behind violence against women in relationships are issues of power and control.

This review of the relevant literature focuses particularly on the general context of violence against women in Canada and the specific context of violence against immigrant and visible minority women.

Canadian Context of Violence against Women

Two major surveys – the Violence Against Women survey conducted in 1993 and the General Social Survey on Victimization in 1999 – have provided excellent sources of empirical data on violence against women in Canada. These and other studies have found that it is a significant issue, with nearly one in three women reporting having experienced abuse at the hands of a husband or common law partner (FREDA Centre, 2001; Miedema, 2000; Fitzgerald, 1999). In 1997, women made up the large majority (88%) of the victims of reported cases of domestic violence (Fitzgerald, 1999). For women with previous marriages, about half reported violence perpetrated by their ex-spouse. In 1998, 83% of victims of reported cases of sexual assault were women, and 98% of the accused were men (Canadian Crime Statistics, 1998). Spousal homicide is one of the deadly consequences of domestic violence left unchecked. Between 1978 and 1997 in Canada, about 1,485 women and 442 men were killed by their spouses (Fitzgerald, 1999).

In 1999/2000, a total of 96,359 women and dependent children were admitted to 448 shelters for abused women across Canada (Locke and Code, 2001), an increase from 1997/1998 when 90,792 women and children were admitted to 413 shelters (Trainor, 1999). A survey of Canada's shelters for abused women found that the majority of women (85%) were there as a result of abuse by their current or former spouse, common-law partner, or boyfriend (Locke and Code, 2001). The types of abuse reported included psychological (77%) and physical abuse (68%), threats (50%), financial abuse (40%), and harassment (36%), while 30% reported sexual abuse (Locke and Code, 2001).

Despite growing concerns about the issue of violence against women, very little is known about the experience of immigrant and visible minority women who encounter partner violence (Krane et al., 2000; Province of Nova Scotia, 2000; Miedema, 2000; West, 1997; Narayan, 1995). And although immigrant and visible minority women constitute a fast-growing segment of the Canadian population, no comprehensive study about their experience of partner violence has been conducted (Province of Nova Scotia, 2000).

Perceptions of Partner Violence

Wife abuse occurs in all cultures and in all social classes, but the resources available to victims of wife abuse in Canada vary greatly according to culture and class (Agnew, 1998). The problem of partner violence in immigrant and ethnic communities is often multi-layered, and leaves its victims – mainly women – battered, isolated and vulnerable (Jiwani, 2001; Krane et al., 2000; Agnew, 1998; Gurr, Mailloux, Kinnon and Doerge, 1996; Narayan, 1995). Many of Canada's recent immigrants must adapt from their more traditional patriarchal societies, where gender roles are well-defined, to Canada's more democratic and less-defined gender roles. The result can be a reduction in the advantage and superior position enjoyed by men, and this shift in the power dynamics can become a potential source of interpersonal conflict in some immigrant communities (Kantor and Jasinski, 2002).

Immigration, by its very nature and implementation, creates vulnerabilities and isolation for many immigrant women (Pinedo and Santinoli, 2001; Jiwani, 2001; Agnew, 1998; Gurr et al., 1996). By immigrating, these women experience a loss of their support networks – a key ingredient in creating vulnerability and isolation – which further enhances the environment for potential wife abuse (Pinedo and Santinoli, 2001; Narayan, 1995). The problem of wife abuse is also intertwined with experiences of being isolated by language, geography, culture, friends and family (Jiwani, 2001; Gurr et al., 1996; Narayan, 1995; Macleod and Shin, 1990). Since many immigrant women who accompanied their husbands to Canada may have had little choice about the move or the particular city in which they were to settle, they generally have few support networks available.

The period of integration is often difficult for immigrant families and there is usually uncertainty about this new way of living, so different from what they knew in their country of origin. The integration process involves learning the new political, social and economic systems of the new society, and its effects may have different implications for immigrant men and women. For immigrant men, difficulties associated with the integration period can include loss of social and economic status and sometimes, changes in family roles. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and an inability to fulfill socially prescribed roles as head of the family and sole bread winner. If prolonged, these difficulties can become the basis for feelings of low self-esteem, inferiority, anger, insecurity and frustration (Mcleod and Shin, 1990).

For immigrant women, the uncertainty and change in their environment can lead to feelings of personal inadequacy, loss of identity and low self-esteem. For some immigrant women, the inability to communicate effectively in English keeps them powerless and isolated, at the lowest political, social and economic levels of Canadian society (Pinedo and Santinoli, 2001; Jiwani, 2001; Miedema, 2000; Agnew, 1998; West, 1997). A language barrier therefore affects their social and family relations, their employment opportunities and limits their access to social and community services and resources.

In addition to the problems encountered by most mainstream women who experience abuse by their partners, immigrant and visible minority women also have to deal with other issues. These include isolation from public services due to culture and language, a lack of resources due to family poverty and discrimination, a lack of skills, experience and marginalization in the labour market (Pinedo and Santinoli, 2001; Jiwani, 2001; Miedema, 2000; West, 1997; Gurr et. al., 1996; Macleod and Shin, 1990).

Research on Partner Violence in Ethnic Communities

In the early 1960s, a change in Canada's immigration policy widened the source countries to include developing nations. As a result, Canada is now a much more racially diverse society. Due to immigration throughout the 1980s and 1990s, members of visible minority groups now make up 13.4% of Canada's population, compared to 11% in 1996, 9% in 1991, and just 6% in 1986 (Statistics Canada, 2003).

An analysis of the National Violence Against Women survey in the United States found that the prevalence of rape and physical assault varied significantly among women of different racial and

ethnic backgrounds (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998). While it was not clear exactly how social, environmental and demographic factors interacted with race and ethnicity to produce these variations, what was clear was that wife abuse was universal (Dutton and Ginkel, 1997).

In another study, evidence from non-representative samples (such as shelter residents) showed no racial differences in rates of partner violence among African-Americans, Latinos and Anglo-Saxons (West, 1997). However, some community samples and several large, nationally representative samples have indicated that African-Americans and Aboriginals reported higher rates of partner violence than did Anglo-Americans (West, 1997). When Latinos were further broken down into groups based on country of origin, women with Puerto Rican husbands reported the highest rates of abuse, and those with Cuban husbands reported the lowest rates of abuse, thus indicating that ethnicity was key to differences in rates of partner abuse (Kantor, Jasinski and Aldarondo, 1994).

Factors contributing to partner violence in ethnic communities can be classified into two groups: demographic and cultural. Demographic factors include age, social class, the partner's employment status, the victim's employment status, and the family's socio-economic status. Cultural factors include the level of acculturation and cultural norms regarding the approval of violence. However, women who have experienced abuse know that it is independent of culture, class, education and other factors (Agnew, 1998; Shin and Mcleod, 1990). Factors influencing partner abuse are therefore not entirely clear.

Other researchers have noted differences in the nature and prevalence of abuse in different ethnic communities based on the interactions of individual personality and the socio-cultural characteristics of that society (Kantor and Jasinski, 2002; Dutton and Van-Ginkel, 1997; Levinson, 1989). Socio-cultural factors influencing partner violence include public prejudices against divorce, ignorance, societal tolerance of spousal abuse, and a lack of legal supports and protections for women (Dutton and Van-Ginkel, 1997). Partner abuse was more prevalent in societies where men controlled the wealth, where conflict resolution was generally violent, and in societies where men had authority and women had no equal rights (Kantor and Jasinski, 2002; Levinson, 1989). In 15 societies, a woman's failure to perform her duties was one of the reasons cited by abusive men (Levinson, 1989). Another reason given was abuse as punishment for adultery (cited in 17 societies) and in 39 societies, any reason or none at all was reported for the abuse (Levinson, 1989).

A prohibition against wife assault also exists in all societies, and as a result, most men experience guilt or remorse after abusing their wives (Dutton and Van-Ginkel, 1997). In order to avoid such feelings, some men will blame the victim for the abuse or will use other things, such as alcohol or drugs, as an excuse for their behaviour. This rationalization involves a lifelong process through which abusers adapt beliefs from the societal culture to justify their abusive behaviour (Kantor and Jasinski, 2002; Dutton and Van-Ginkel, 1997; Levinson, 1989). Men with abusive personalities are therefore more likely to hold negative attitudes towards women. Even in a sample of relatively non-abusive individuals, those with the more abusive personalities

related to spouses or partners seemed to have more negative attitudes about women (Dutton and Van-Ginkel, 1997).

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature reviewed in this section indicates that immigrant and visible minority women who experience abuse are faced with a very complicated challenge. In addition to the many problems typically encountered by victims of partner violence, immigrant and visible minority women also face worries concerning such things as their immigration status, and complicating factors as a result of different social, cultural, linguistic, and racial concerns.

The literature on wife abuse in ethnic and immigrant communities is predominantly reports commissioned by governments to identify gaps in services, or reports initiated by community-based groups to demonstrate the unmet needs of women from these ethnic communities. The reports by community groups have contributed greatly to the knowledge of wife abuse in immigrant and visible minority communities by documenting the gaps in services as well as the potential capacity of community organizations to offer culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services (Pinedo and Santinoli, 2001; Agnew, 1998).

Among the few studies that have been done on partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women, a common theme is the call for more comprehensive research on the prevalence, nature and characteristics of this kind of abuse and the factors that contribute to the problem (Miedema, 2000; Province of Nova Scotia, 2000; Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998; West, 1997; Macleod and Shin, 1990). The studies also emphasize the need for ongoing education concerning partner violence, using culturally appropriate information, and disseminating that information to women and their partners through outlets in the ethno-cultural communities.

The literature also emphasizes the need for shelters and counselling services, which are generally part of the voluntary sector, and the justice system – including the police, courts, probation officers, and prison officers – to acquire greater cultural competency through closer networking and partnerships with ethno-cultural communities. This will ensure that women who experience partner violence can access victimization services that are appropriate to their needs, and that patterns and determinants of violence in specific communities are better understood by public authorities and the voluntary sector (Pinedo and Santinoli, 2001).

Data Analysis

Findings

In this section, findings from the analysis of the General Social Survey are presented. For this analysis, a sample was selected of women who had reported any form of partner violence, resulting in a sample size of 1,980 women. From this group, a sub-sample of immigrant and visible minority women who had reported partner violence (504 cases) was identified for special analysis.

Although the General Social Survey provides data on women who have experienced partner abuse, it has certain limitations that are critical in setting the context for this analysis on immigrant and visible minority women. These include the language of interview, data collection methods and the nature of this sensitive subject of partner abuse. (See a detailed explanation of GSS limitations in the methodology section.)

Demographic characteristics

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of immigrant and visible minority women who had experienced any form of partner abuse within a period of one to five years prior to the date of the survey interview. In the vast majority of cases, the interview language for this sample was English, with only 9% of interviews conducted in French. A majority of the women (54%) in this sample were aged 25 to 44; 32% were aged 45 to 64; 5% were between the ages of 15 and 24; and 9% were aged 65 or older.

Most of the women in this group were married. Only 4% reported being in common law unions; 14% were divorced, and 9% said they were separated from their spouse/partner.

Large households were common among these immigrant and visible minority women: 19% lived in households with four members, and 16% lived in households of five or more members; 32% lived in households with only two members, and 11% lived by themselves.

The majority of women in this sample were born outside of Canada (63%). Of that group, only 7% had been in Canada for less than 10 years; 23% had lived here for 10 to 23 years; 20% had lived here for 24 to 38 years; and about 13% had lived in Canada for 39 years or more.

In this sample of immigrant and visible minority women, 88% lived in urban areas and 12% lived in rural areas.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of immigrant and visible minority women who have experienced partner abuse, 1999

Demographic Characteristic	%
Official Language Proficiency	
English	91
French	9
Age Group	
15-24	5
25-34	27
35-44	27
45-54	22
55-64	10
65+	9

Marital Status	
Common law	4
Married	69
Widowed	3
Divorced	14
Separated	9
Household Size	
One person	11
Two members	32
Three members	21
Four members	19
Five or more members	16
Household Language	
English only	68
French only	4
Other language (includes other language only, and combinations of other language, English and French)	28
Country of Birth	
Canada	37
Outside Canada	63
Years lived in Canada	
Less that 10 yrs	7
10 to 23 yrs	23
24 to 38 yrs	20
39 or more yrs	13
N/A (born in Canada)	37
Visible Minority Background	
Visible Minority	32
Non-visible minority	68
Area of Residence	
Rural	12
Urban	88

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Socio-economic characteristics

Table 2 illustrates that the majority (62%) of immigrant and visible minority women who had experienced partner violence were working. About 17% were engaged in household work and child care as their main activities. Others were enrolled in school (5%), retired (11%), or looking for work (2%).

Employment was the main source of income for a majority of the women (66%). About 20% earned less than $20,000 a year; 45% reported annual incomes of $20,000 to $59,000. A significant proportion (19%) did not state their income.

Among the sample, 28% had completed a diploma, college or technical training; 24% had completed a university degree; 15% reported having some post-secondary education; and 16% had obtained a high school diploma.

Table 2: Socio-economic characteristics of immigrant and visible minority women, 1999

Socio-economic Status	%
Woman's Education	
Doctoral / Masters / Bachelors degree	24
Diploma certificate from community college	28
Some university / community college	15
High school diploma	16
Some secondary /elementary /no schooling	17
Woman's main activity	
Working	62
Looking for work	2
Going to school	5
Caring for children	9
Household work	8
Retired	11
Other	3
Annual Personal Income	
No income	9
$5,000 to $9,999	11
$10,000 to $19,999	20
$20,000 to $39,999	25
$40,000 to $59,999	10
$60,000 to $99,999	5
$100,000 or more	*
Main Source of Income	
Employment	66
Employment Insurance/ Workers	1
Compensation	8
Benefits/ Retirement/ Old Age Security/ Guaranteed Income Supplement/ Spouses Allowance/ Child Tax Benefit	3
Provincial Social Assistance	7
Child support/ Alimony	9
No income	3

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

* indicates sample size was too small to provide a reliable estimate.

Spouses of immigrant and visible minority women reported high levels of education and a majority (54%) cited work as their main activity (see Table 3). Eight per cent of the spouses

reported that they were retired. A majority of the respondents (57%) lived in single detached houses; 13% lived in low-rise buildings; 12% lived in high-rise dwellings; and 18% lived in other kinds of housing. About 45% reported annual family incomes below $40,000, while 44% reported annual family incomes between $40,000 and $100,000; 6% indicated family incomes of more than $100,000 per year.

Table 3: Socio-economic characteristics of immigrant and visible minority women and their spouses/ partners, 1999

Socio-economic status	%
Spouse/ partner's education	
Doctoral / Masters / Bachelors degree	18
Diploma certificate from community college	15
Some university / community college	5
High school diploma	14
Some secondary /elementary /no schooling	13
Spouse/ partner's main activity	
Working	54
Looking for work	2
Going to school	1
Caring for children	*
Household work	*
Retired	8
Other	1
Annual Income of respondent's household	
No income	2
$5,000 to $9,999	4
$10,000 to $19,999	11
$20,000 to $39,999	28
$40,000 to $59,999	21
$60,000 to $99,999	23
$100,000 or more	6
Dwelling type	
Single detached house	57
Low-rise building	13
High-rise building	12
Other	18

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

* indicates sample size was too small to provide a reliable estimate.

Neighbourhood crime

A majority of the immigrant and visible minority women (58%) thought their neighbourhood had less crime than other areas in Canada; 27% said they had the same amount of crime, and only 7% felt that they had more crime in their neighbourhoods (see Table 4).

Table 4: Perceptions of neighbourhood crime, compared to other areas in Canada, 1999

About the same: 27%
Higher: 7%
Lower: 58%
Don't know: 8%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Half of the women felt that crime in their neighbourhoods had remained about the same level over the previous five years; 32% felt that crime had increased in their neighbourhoods, and only 4% thought that crime in their neighbourhoods had decreased over the five years (see Table 5).

Table 5: Changes in neighbourhood crime in the last 5 years, 1999

About the same: 50%
Increased: 32%
Decreased: 4%
Don't know: 14%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

The next set of data compares the perceptions and experiences of immigrant and visible minority women with those of other women who had experienced partner violence. (As noted earlier, "other women" refers to women who were neither immigrants nor members of visible minority groups.) Due to limitations in the GSS (see a detailed explanation under Methodology), the data may not show significant differences in perceptions between the two groups, because the survey data may not accurately capture the experiences of many immigrant and visible minority women. Focus groups were therefore used as part of this study to help ensure a more balanced reflection of these women's experiences.

Perceptions about police

Overall perceptions about the police and law enforcement services are presented in Table 6, with comparisons shown between the perceptions of immigrant and visible minority women and those of other women. Respondents were asked about the effectiveness of police in enforcing the law, responding to calls, being approachable or easy to talk to, and ensuring the safety of citizens.

Among immigrant and visible minority women, 60% reported that the police did a good job in enforcing laws, with only 4% giving a poor performance rating. Sixty-five per cent said the police were very approachable and easy to talk to, and only 7% said the police did a poor job in responding to calls and providing public information on ways to reduce crime.

Among other women, the perceptions of police law enforcement were more positive. More of them reported that the police did a good job in responding to calls (53%), that they were approachable and easy to talk to (69%), that they provided public information on ways to reduce crime (60%), and ensured the safety of citizens (66%). Almost the same proportion of other women as immigrant and visible minority women reported that the police did a poor job of

enforcing the law. It was also significant that about twice as many immigrant and visible minority women as other women did not respond to the questions.

Table 6: Perceptions about police responses and law enforcement, 1999

Police Response	Immigrant & Vis. Min. (%)	Other Women (%)
Enforcing laws		
Good job	60	64
Average job	27	29
Poor job	4	4
Don't know / not stated	9	4
Responding to calls		
Good job	46	53
Average job	18	20
Poor job	7	6
Don't know / not stated	29	21
Approachable and easy to talk to		
Good job	65	69
Average job	16	16
Poor job	3	3
Don't know / not stated	16	12
Information to public on ways to reduce crime		
Good job	51	60
Average job	25	24
Poor job	9	8
Don't know / not stated	15	8
Ensuring safety of citizens in your area		
Good job	59	66
Average job	27	25
Poor job	4	4
Don't know / not stated	10	5

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Perceptions about the Canadian criminal courts

About 14% of the women in the sample had come into contact with the criminal courts for things like public information sessions, traffic violations, as victims of crime, or for other reasons. Among both immigrant and visible minority women and other women, the perceptions of the Canadian criminal court system were not very good (see Table 7). A majority of women in both groups (38% of immigrant/vis. min. and 40% of other women) said that the courts did a poor job of providing justice quickly. As well, 32% of each group said the Canadian courts did a poor job in helping victims. In determining whether an accused person was guilty or innocent, 38% of immigrant and visible minority women and 46% of other women said the courts did an average job. About 33% of immigrant and visible minority women felt that the courts did an average job in ensuring a fair trial, while a higher proportion of other women gave the same rating (39%).

Table 7: Perceptions of the performance of the Canadian court system, 1999

Performance of Canadian court system	Immigrant & Vis. Min. (%)	Other Women (%)
Providing justice quickly		
Good job	13	12
Average job	31	39
Poor job	38	40
Don't know	18	9
Helping the victim		
Good job	15	16
Average job	29	37
Poor job	32	33
Don't know	24	14
Determining guilt or innocence		
Good job	18	19
Average job	38	46
Poor job	19	20
Don't know	25	15
Ensuring a fair trial		
Good job	35	37
Average job	33	39
Poor job	9	12
Don't know	22	12

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Experience with partner abuse

According to the data, immigrant and visible minority women experienced several different kinds of abuse by their partners, including physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse (see Table 8). Emotional and financial abuse by a current or former partner was the most common type reported (10%), while about 4% said they had experienced physical or sexual abuse. Similar proportions of other women and immigrant and visible minority women experienced abuse by their current partner, however, other women reported higher levels of abuse by ex-partners than those reported by immigrant and visible minority women.

Table 8: Experience with partner violence, 1999

	Immigrant & Vis. Min (%)	Other women (%)	All women (%)
Abuse by Current Partner			
Emotional or financial abuse	5.7	5.8	5.8
Physical or sexual abuse	2.0	2.2	2.1
Abuse by Ex-partner			
Emotional or financial abuse	5.3	8.5	7.5
Physical or sexual abuse	2.2	4.1	3.5
Abuse by Current or Ex-partner			
Emotional or financial abuse	10.5	14.0	13.0
Physical or sexual abuse	4.2	6.2	5.5

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

About 13% of immigrant and visible minority women who experienced partner violence reported that they were physically injured as a result of the abuse; among other women, 17% reported injuries from partner abuse. Some immigrant and visible minority women also reported being hospitalized (3%) and receiving medical attention (6%) as a result of abuse (see Table 9).

Table 9: Consequences of abuse, 1999

	Immigrant & Vis. Min. (%)	Other women (%)
Physically injured by the abuse	13	17
Victim hospitalized	3	4
Victim received medical attention	6	6

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Only one in 10 immigrant and visible minority women who had experienced partner abuse had reported the abuse to police (see Table 10). A higher proportion had sought help from someone other than the police. Other sources of help included a friend (21%), co-worker (9%), doctor (12%), family member (20%), and lawyer (8%). Only 5% had reached out to a spiritual advisor. Among other women, 12% had reported the abuse to the police, and higher proportions had sought help from others as well.

Table 10: Reporting the abuse, 1999

Reported abuse by current or former partner to:	Immigrant & visible minority women	"Other women"
Police	10%	12%
Friend	21%	29%
Family	20%	28%
Co-worker	9%	12%
Doctor	12%	13%
Lawyer	8%	10%
Spiritual advisor	5%	5%
Someone else	28%	35%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Overall, only about 17% of immigrant and visible minority women had contacted a service agency to seek help for the abuse (see Table 11). The data show, however, that support services such as community centres, shelters and support groups, and police-based victim services were underutilized, with only 2% to 4% of immigrant and visible minority women accessing these services.

Table 11: Seeking help, 1999

Services contacted in the last five years for help with abuse	Immigrant & visible minority women	Other women
Crisis centre	6%	7%
Counsellor	12%	17%
Community centre	4%	7%
Shelter	4%	4%

Support group	3%	4%
Police- /court-based victims' services	2%	3%
Contacted any of services	17%	21%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Effects of Socio-economic and Household Characteristics

Effects of education:
Women who had completed their university degrees reported the highest levels of all types of abuse, while women with lower levels of education, such as those who had completed high school or had some high school education, reported lower levels of abuse (see Table 12). Highly educated women were almost twice as likely as those with low levels of education to access the support services available, and women who had completed college or obtained some college education were more likely to report the abuse to the police or others.

Effects of main activity:
Working women reported the highest levels of physical or sexual abuse (7%), yet they were the less likely to report the abuse to the police or someone else (see Table 12). Unemployed women reported a high level of physical or sexual abuse (6%) and the highest levels of emotional or financial abuse by a current partner. However, unemployed women were also the most likely to have reported the violence to police (31%) or to someone else (42%), and to have accessed the available services (36%). Women whose main activity was caring for children or household work also reported significant levels of abuse, and they were the less likely to have reported the abuse to the police or others. Women who were enrolled in school, retired or unable to work reported the lowest level of abuse for all types of abuse.

Effects of annual personal income:
Women without income reported the lowest levels of abuse. They were also the least likely to have reported the violence to police or others, but the most likely to have accessed available services (see Table 12). Women earning high incomes of $60,000 or more reported the highest levels of all types of abuse, and they were the least likely to have accessed the available services. They were more likely than women without income to have reported the abuse to police or others.

Table 12: Effects of education, main activity and annual personal income, 1999

Woman's Socio-economic Characteristics	Emotional or financial abuse (%)	Physical or sexual abuse (%)	Reported abuse to police (%)	Reported abuse to others (%)	Contacted or used services (%)
Education					
University degree	12	5	11	26	21
Diploma / certificate /from community college	11	4	11	31	17
Elementary /High school	9	3	9	25	11

Main activity					
Working	15	7	11	32	16
Unemployed	16	6	31	42	36
Enrolled in school	6	3	8	28	11
Caring for children / Household work	13	4	9	20	18
Retired/ unable to work	6	2	9	17	15
Annual personal income					
No income	8	2	6.5	19	19
$5000 to $29,999	12	5	12	31	18
$30,000 to $59,999	13	6	9	31	19
$60,000 or more	17	8	12	26	13

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Effects of partner's education level:
Other socio-economic characteristics, such as the partner's level of education, household income and household language, were also related to the women's experience with partner violence (see Table 13). Women with highly educated spouses were less likely to have experienced any abuse, and they were less likely to have reported abuse to police or others, or to have contacted any social services.

Effects of household income:
Women in low-income households – that is, those with annual incomes of $29,999 or less – reported the highest levels of all types of abuse (see Table 13). However, they were more likely than women in higher-income households to have reported the abuse to police and to have contacted or used a social service. Women in high-income households – with annual incomes of $60,000 or more – reported the lowest levels of all types of abuse. They were also the least likely to have called the police or reported the abuse to anyone else, and the least likely to have accessed the available services.

Effects of household language:
Women who spoke only French in the household reported the highest levels of all types of abuse, but they were the least likely to have accessed the services available (see Table 13). They were the least likely to have reported the abuse to police, but more likely to have told someone else. Women who spoke other languages reported lower levels of abuse and they were the least likely to have reported the abuse to other people. Women who spoke only English in the household were the most likely to have reported the abuse to police and to have accessed the services available.

Table 13: Effects of the partner's education, household income and language, 1999

	Emotional or financial abuse (%)	Physical or sexual abuse (%)	Reported abuse to police (%)	Reported abuse to others (%)	Contacted or used services (%)
Spouse/ partner's education					
University degree	11	4	7	17	10
Diploma / certificate /from community college	12	5	5	29	13
Elementary /High school	12	4	10	25	11
Household income					
$29,999 or less	14	6	18	35	26
$30,000 to $59,999	13	6	9	30	14
$60,000 or more	11	4	6	21	12
Household language	11	5	11	30	18
English only	13	6	8	38	4
French only	10	3	10	21	14
Other language					

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey, Cycle 13: Victimization, 2000.

Analysis of the Focus Group Discussions

Nine focus groups were held in seven cities across Canada. English discussion groups were held in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Calgary, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Halifax, and French sessions were held in Ottawa and Montreal. Each focus group was tape recorded and comprehensive notes were taken at each session. Tapes from the two French groups were transcribed and translated into English. Results of the focus group discussions presented here reflect the views of the participants and not necessarily the views of the CCSD.

Participants for the focus groups were selected from among frontline workers in immigrant settlement agencies and social service agencies that work directly with immigrant and visible minority women. The selection process involved a combination of purposive and snowball-sampling strategies. Lists of settlement and social service agencies were used to develop more targeted lists for each city. An initial letter was sent by fax or email, stating the purpose and goals of the focus groups and inviting agency representatives to participate in the discussions. Some of the agencies also assisted the process by helping to recruit additional participants, and follow-up phone calls were made to answer any additional questions. In total, 85 frontline workers representing 75 settlement and social service agencies participated in the focus groups in the seven cities.

In analyzing text data from the focus group discussions, meaning units were first identified, then further sorted into thematic areas and categorized. Tables were developed to illustrate the various categories, themes and meaning units, then the tables were analyzed for interpretation and to write up the findings. The broad categories included the following: immigration; access to justice; the police force; culture; and social services. The themes included the following: needs

of women; factors contributing to vulnerability; major problems faced by frontline workers; and recommendations.

Frontline workers in the focus groups reported that immigrant, refugee and visible minority women who have experienced partner abuse find themselves in a somewhat unique and certainly difficult situation. Problems frequently cited can be grouped in three broad areas:

- *Emotional*: Most abused women experience a range of emotions, including sadness, worry, confusion, embarrassment and shame. Some women also experience emotional trauma and feelings of loss of control, while others develop a spirit of defiance.
- *Physical*: Risks to the women's health are characterized by physical harm, excess stress, depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts.
- *Structural*: Some immigrant and visible minority women face oppression as a result of systemic or structural concerns, such as concerns about their sponsorship arrangements, a lack of trust in the judicial system, lack of access to legal information or support services, racial discrimination, and the marginalization of immigrant services.

Emotional problems:
Fear, shame and guilt are the most common emotions when immigrant and visible minority women are faced with partner violence. They often blame themselves for the violence and the failure of their marriage. For some immigrant women, their greatest fear is that the relationship with their husbands will end and they express fears about financial issues. According to one focus group participant, the women find the financial insecurity "scary and terrifying."

Most women immigrate to Canada as family members, so their immigration status is heavily reliant on the status of their spouse. As a result, their marriage and any decisions they make can have serious consequences. This is referred to as the "sponsorship effect," where the fact that you have been sponsored by a partner makes you indebted to him. In addition to feelings of gratitude, some women are continually reminded about their sponsored status, with the implication that they have little or no control over their lives. The decision to take action to end an abusive relationship can therefore result in an unwelcome change in their immigration status. Over the years, there have been some changes in the immigration regulations aimed at helping women in these situations, but the changes are not widely known by the group which needs them most. The sponsorship effect is therefore a key ingredient in the experience of partner abuse among immigrant, refugee and visible minority women.

Some immigrant and refugee women may be confused about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, because their husbands have "brainwashed" them by intentionally misleading them about Canadian customs. In such cases, it is a deliberate attempt to keep the women unaware of their rights as women, partners and newly landed immigrants. In fact, some women are told that because they were sponsored into Canada, they have no legal rights, no

rights generally, and if they complain to anyone, the husbands can have them deported and they will lose their children.

With little knowledge about the Canadian system of justice, the thought of having to navigate such a strange and complex system can be overwhelming. And it is especially daunting for recent immigrants and refugees. In their countries of origin, many women were able to approach members of their extended families to deal with misunderstandings or help with problems related to partner violence. Elders in their community would resolve cases of family disarray, but here in Canada the women find themselves without family supports. In order to obtain help with partner violence, they must now approach a stranger in a social service agency.

Some immigrant women blame themselves for the problems in their marriage. For some, their priority is to live up to their family's expectations and to be constantly vigilant about concealing any signs of the disarray in their family.

For some immigrant and visible minority women, their experience of partner abuse is related to their countries of origin. In the more traditional patriarchal societies, some men believe they have the right to beat their wives when they "step out of line," and that those rights continue in Canada. In one case, a husband was so certain of his right to control that he beat his wife for not following his rule to the letter, then he called the police to report her, thinking that she would be incarcerated. Of course, he was surprised when *he* was hauled off to jail.

In other instances, religion can play a key role in the family dynamics. Customs and beliefs are often deeply rooted in religious practices and may complicate the experience of abuse for immigrant and visible minority women.

For most immigrant and visible minority women who experience partner violence, they have been in the abusive relationship for a long time before they finally reach out for help. By the time they seek refuge in a shelter, they are extremely fearful and they have no notion of their rights. They are petrified that their husband will find them and that they may lose custody of their children. As one shelter worker described it, "they are at the end of their rope, and they need our help to cope with the situation."

Their hopes:
Participants in the focus groups said the immigrant and visible minority women they see who have experienced partner abuse hope to find safety and security for their families and an adequate education for their children. The most common phrase heard by frontline workers is, "Can you fix him?" – which captures the essence of the women's wishes in reaching out for help. Their goal is not to be separated from their spouse, or to break up the family, but rather to change the behaviour of their abuser.

In seeking help, the women hope that:

- the abuse and violence will stop;
- the abuser will understand their pain and the negative effects of the violence on their children;

- the women will regain their self-esteem;
- they will gain financial power;
- they will be independent; or,
- they can survive and "not rock the boat" until they have their own immigration status.

Risk factors:
There are several risk factors which, when combined, can have a cumulative effect that leaves immigrant and visible minority women vulnerable to partner violence and can create barriers that interfere with or prevent them from leaving the abusive situation. These factors, and the context in which they operate, are presented in Table 14.

Being sponsored into a country or immigrating to join a spouse does not *cause* violence against women, but it can be used as a weapon by some male sponsors of immigrant, refugee and visible minority women. In such cases, a male sponsor can deliberately distort the truth about the sponsorship process and he can threaten the woman with deportation if she disobeys. During the waiting period for the immigration status to be established, these women are extremely vulnerable and they don't want to do anything that could potentially jeopardize their position.

Table 14: Risk factors

Immigration: Sponsorship; immigration status
Access to Justice: Inadequate legal aid; unaware of rights and laws in Canada; stereotyping; lack of interpretation services; length of legal proceedings; child custody
Police: Response to calls; counter charging; lack of trust and confidence in system; attitudes and actions
Culture: Ostracism; gender roles; fear of community response; lack of proficiency in official languages; confidentiality
Social Services: Government funding cuts to social services; unknown help from the system; structural oppression

The perception of abuse varies, based on individual backgrounds and countries of origin, as does its acceptance or toleration as a societal norm. In our focus group discussions, frontline participants noted that most abuse concerns issues of control or power, but with different cultural beliefs practiced around the world, some societies are more permissive than others about certain behaviours. For immigrant, refugee and visible minority women who are new to Canada, they may be uncertain of the customs here and unaware of cultural differences in our society's perception of and response to partner abuse. And that is *not* the kind of information that an abusive partner would likely share with them.

Some abusive male partners seem to believe that once their immigrant or visible minority spouse learns about Canada's intolerance of abuse, and she finds out about her inherent rights as a citizen of this country, she will stand up against his abusive behaviour. This perception was illustrated in one of the focus groups, when a participant tried to explain how family relationships were being influenced by immigration. According to him, partners would normally live in complete harmony in their countries of origin, and he described the woman's status as that

of "a bird in a cage." After immigrating to Canada, however, the woman learns about her rights and as her husband gradually opens up the cage, the woman causes trouble. The irony of this reference – undoubtedly intended to imply a pampered existence in a sort of gilded cage – is that some men can and will do all they can to keep their partners "caged" or controlled.

In some ethno-cultural communities, trying to disclose a problem of partner violence can isolate a woman from her particular community, which can reject her, and from the "mainstream" culture, which will not accept her. Other women who have experienced partner abuse may also suffer from feelings of fear and rejection, but they do not face the same problems of acceptance within a society as do immigrant, refugee and visible minority women. In some immigrant and ethno-cultural communities, the role of the extended family is stronger, and the proximity of the victim to others in the community increases the likelihood of her being found if she tries to flee from the abuse. Involvement in some faith communities can also cause concerns for some women, because some value systems and beliefs can seem to contradict holding the abusive husband accountable for his actions. One focus group participant spoke of a young woman who had fled to a shelter, but her partner as well as her entire faith and cultural communities were involved in the search to bring her back.

Unique to the problems faced by abused immigrant and visible minority women is the fact that they are not only leaving their partners, they may also have to leave their cultural community, extended family and faith communities as well. Even if the woman moves to another city or province, the cultural connections are so strong that it is relatively easy for her abuser to track her down. Young women in particular often do not realize the magnitude of what they are giving up, with the possibility that they will be unable to reconnect with their cultural communities. For those who do understand what is at state by leaving an abusive partner, it can be one more daunting barrier which prevents them from seeking help.

Employment, unemployment and underemployment for immigrant, refugee and visible minority women and their partners can be key factors in creating the context for abuse. Focus group participants reported that many immigrant and refugee women had a greater ability to adapt to the new culture and a greater acceptance of change than did their male partners. As a result, many women have adapted to Canada faster and better, and some have been able to obtain a job sooner than their spouse. This is also due, in part, to the women's tendency and willingness to work at anything, despite the fact that they might be overqualified for positions.

For some male immigrants, however, their pride can keep them at home, rather than, for example, taking on a job as a dishwasher somewhere. As a result, many immigrant women become the breadwinners in their households, and this can be threatening to the male partner. Some men cannot accept this change in roles, and it can lead to conflicts, and potentially, partner violence. There can also be pressures from the cultural community and expectations about proper roles and responsibilities, so men may feel the need to be in control and not be the one who stays at home. In extreme cases, some women are pressured to wait until their husband finds work before they do, in order to avoid wounding their partner's ego and potentially risking abuse.

Immigrant, refugee and visible minority women who lack proficiency in English or French are additionally vulnerable. They are less likely to be able to gain employment, and they are highly dependent on their spouse for financial support and for translation services as well. If they experience partner abuse, the language barrier makes reaching out for help even more difficult. A very common example from all the focus groups concerned calls to the police. For women not proficient in English or French, the language barrier prevents her from being understood, so the police may ask her to put someone else on the phone to explain the problem. If that person is a child, they could decide to support the mother, or go to the father and speak against the mother. And if that person is the abusive partner, he can give police a false explanation – to the woman's disadvantage. In some cases, police have charged the abused woman, based on the false explanation provided by her abusive partner.

For immigrant and visible minority women experiencing partner violence, a key component of their survival is access to justice. In Canada, that access begins with the police – which unfortunately, are not trusted by many members of immigrant and ethnic minority communities. Focus group participants were united in identifying the dire need for sensitivity training and cultural-awareness training for police forces. The police practice of "double charging" or counter charging was seen as a dangerous trend and a major barrier for women seeking help. It involves the police charging both the male abuser and the woman victim, if they are uncertain about the circumstances. In one case cited, the police warned an immigrant woman to reconsider her decision to lay charges against her partner because of the likelihood that she would be charged as well.

The next step in the process is the Canadian court system, but for this group of women, it is no easier to deal with than the police. The processing of the charges seemed to go on forever, and legal aid is inadequate to cover the costs of the cases. Frontline workers reported that while some lawyers were very helpful, others were impatient and inconsiderate of their client's interests. As well, immigrant and visible minority women may not be aware of the relevant laws and their rights in this area. Other problems identified included fears of retaliation, fear of losing their children in the justice system, a lack of compassionate lawyers, and a lack of translation services to understand the process. As one focus group participant put it, "the justice system is not working for women of colour."

Three of four recent immigrants to Canada are members of visible minority groups, making them and their communities vulnerable to racism. Racism refers to deliberate overt and covert attempts by individuals and institutions to discriminate against individuals or groups based on race. Members of visible minority groups say they are more likely to be stopped by the police, more likely to be prosecuted for minor offences, and to be jailed. Focus group participants in all seven cities concurred that racism was a key barrier preventing immigrant and visible minority women who had experienced violence from reporting the abuse to police or seeking help. They felt forced to make a choice between "delivering their men" to be treated unfairly by the police, or learning to live with the abuse. Even when they called for help, they did not think they were treated with respect and fairness by the police force or the justice system generally.

Structural or systemic oppression:
In its simplest terms, structural or systemic oppression is the establishment and operation of systems and structures that keep others in a society – in this case, immigrants and visible minorities – in a state of low income, underemployment and inactive in the social fabric of the society. The major components of structural oppression include racial stereotyping, racism, negative attitudes towards immigrants, and systemic problems like a lack of affordable housing and cuts in social services. At this point in the focus group discussions, a key question was raised: At what point does an immigrant cease to be considered an immigrant and start to be recognized as a citizen? Even after immigrants become naturalized citizens, their citizenship can exist only on paper; they are visible minorities, so they remain forever immigrants in the society.

To illustrate structural oppression and its effects on immigrant and visible minority women who experience partner violence, the following case history was provided. A "mail-order bride" sought help after years of partner abuse when she became pregnant. Her first call was to the police, who referred her to a shelter. At the shelter, she could not communicate well with the frontline workers, and because she was unclear about what was going on around her, she continuously screamed and cried. A cultural interpreter from the community centre was called, and they were able to calm her down and obtain her story. It seems she had been screaming because she thought the police had sent her to jail.

Unfortunately, the small local community centre did not have a counsellor or lawyer on staff because they did not have the funding to cover such services. Instead, the woman was referred to a minister for counselling, and she was encouraged to go back to her husband. Three years later, the same woman showed up again at the shelter – this time, with two young children. She had been severely abused. After her case finally made its way through the justice system, her children were taken away from her and given to the spouse – her abuser – while she remained in a mental institution.

Trends of violence, attitudes and supports in ethnic communities:
In some cities, such as Calgary and Montreal, focus group participants reported that partner abuse was increasing. In almost all the cities, frontline workers said there had been an increase in the reporting of abuse, due to more awareness about individual rights and societal laws on partner abuse. But in some cases, ethnic communities are not always supportive of an abused woman, and there can be pressure not to report the abuse for fear it will damage the community's image. Fears of further racism and stereotyping can inhibit women and dissuade them from reaching out for help.

Most immigrant and visible minority communities have a few formal or informal community organizations, but they usually have little or no funding to provide services to support women who are experiencing abuse. At best, some of these organizations can provide volunteers to act as cultural interpreters and translators for other, "mainstream" organizations. Due to fears about confidentiality, however, some women are loath to seek help from these community organizations, and many mainstream organizations will not refer women to them because of confidentiality concerns. As a result, these community organizations tend to be marginalized, under-funded and heavily underutilized for this purpose.

Major problems faced by frontline workers:
Frontline workers and their agencies face several problems in their attempts to help immigrant, refugee and visible minority women who experience partner abuse (see Table 15). These include problems with inadequate funding, marginalization of their services, high demands for service, a lack of housing and daycare services for those needing assistance, and a lack of training and co-ordination among service organizations.

Table 15: Major problems faced by frontline workers

Immigration: Lack of awareness of available services; inadequate client referral; lack of funding of integration services

Access to Justice: Lack of legal aid; inadequate legal education; poor client referral; lack of training; little collaboration of services

Police: Lack of awareness of available services; inadequate client referral; lack of sensitivity training; little collaboration of services

Culture: Lack of interpreters; cultural sensitivity; marginalization; stereotypes; harassment and hostility

Social Services: Lack of funding; need for child care; poor service coordination; high demand for services; difficulty of community outreach; marginalization of social work; undervaluing of work

Funding:
The most important issue for all frontline workers in the focus group discussions was funding. Funding was deemed essential for adequate staffing and the provision of programs and services to address the needs of immigrant, refugee and visible minority women who experience abuse. In Quebec, it was reported that the province had allocated funds for community services, but not allocated specific funds for this purpose, making it hard for shelter workers to provide adequate services. Current funding levels were said to be inadequate to meet current program requirements, thus making it almost impossible to develop other programs relevant to the unique cultural needs of immigrant women in abusive situations.

For many – perhaps most – frontline workers, their work environment already suffers from insufficient human and financial resources to provide the essential services and meet the administrative needs of their organizations. They already feel overworked and underpaid, and they have difficulty finding enough time to fulfill the requirements of their position, let alone support the abused women in a more complete and desirable fashion.

As indicated earlier, the lack of interpretation services can be a severe barrier for both the abused woman and those seeking to help her, and the lack of such services is primarily a question of financial affordability. Interpretation services are needed by immigrant, refugee and visible minority women as they go through the immigration system, the law enforcement system, and the court system. Frontline workers must rely on volunteer interpreters to fill this crucial need, but the use of volunteers can further exploit immigrant and visible minority women by providing them with inadequate or inexperienced assistance. Since cultural interpreters and translators are an essential part of meeting these needs, some women must find their own translation services – usually free through family members or paid for from their own meagre resources.

Unfortunately, all agencies require lengthy procedures in order to obtain interpretation services, so unless they can be provided free of charge by a family member, very few abused women can afford to pay for them.

Focus group participants who were themselves members of immigrant and visible minority communities reported that there has been a trend of harassment and hostility from men and other members of their communities, and this trend was reported in almost all the cities. In part, this reflects the lack of public education about laws concerning partner violence and its impact on other family members. As well, the value of this work is often not well-recognized, so workers in this area tend to feel marginalized and their role in addressing the problem of partner violence tends to be devalued.

Summary of key informant interviews:
Key informant interviews were conducted with individuals from the service sector, including those in police services, court services and other support agencies. Responses from the key informants indicated that they were aware of many of the issues faced by immigrant and visible minority women who have experienced partner violence. Among the major challenges to their roles in providing support are limits caused by funding constraints and cultural barriers. Other barriers identified by the key informants were similar to those discussed above by the focus group participants, including the following:

a) immigrant and visible minority women who are victims of partner violence fear embarrassing their family and community;
b) the women are isolated;
c) they lack knowledge about laws in Canada;
d) they are stereotyped based on uninformed cultural beliefs;
e) there is a lack of educational outreach programs in the cultural community;
f) interpretation services are inconsistent ;
g) the prosecutorial system does not fit well into women's expectations;
h) the women have poor perceptions of the police and mistrust them;
i) the rigid and structured system of services and supports often does not meet their needs.

Suggestions from focus group participants and key informants:
The long-term goal of addressing partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women should include strategies to prevent the abuse, as well a support system for victims. A major component of such a prevention strategy would include public education about partner violence and information about Canadian laws relevant to immigrant and ethno-cultural communities. Needed supports for victims should include help with securing legal aid, ensuring women's safety, emotional support to help her restore a sense of control and validate her feelings and choices, and support for other healing strategies to deal with the effects of trauma (see Table 16).

Table 16: Suggestions from focus group participants and key informants

Immigration: Revision of sponsorship procedures; gender analysis in policy development; sustainable funding

Access to Justice: Adequate legal aid; fair and sensitive court system; cross-cultural awareness in procedures; advocacy on behalf of immigrant and visible minority women; need for interpretation services; diversity among employees

Police: Changes in attitudes and practices; need for cultural-sensitive training; need for interpretation services; diversity among officers

Culture: Public education; recognition of the problem; implications of partner violence on children; provision of community and family supports; confidentiality; advocate policies on relevant issues

Social Services: Adequate funding; development of relevant programs; child care programs; cultural sensitivity in policy development and implementation; diversity among employees; community outreach.

Immigration and Other Government Policies:

Information about what government services are available has not been efficiently distributed, and a better communications system among authorities at the federal, provincial and municipal levels is needed. Frontline workers delivering social services must be able to rely on well-established channels with up-to-date information in order to better help immigrant, refugee and visible minority women who are victims of partner violence. Government policies and strategies need to be developed to address the needs of immigrant and visible minority communities and the resources available in those communities. And the development, implementation and evaluation of those policies and practices must include the involvement and expertise of frontline workers.

Public Education:

The ways in which information about partner violence is conveyed to immigrant and visible minority women needs to be re-assessed and revised. Focus group participants identified things like "informal coffee house type of get-togethers" as being effective, where a variety of topics could be covered at different times. Through these kinds of sessions, immigrant and visible minority women could find out more about the various Canadian systems and services, including political, educational, legal, housing and social services.

Educational institutions need to be more aware of issues surrounding partner violence and its implications for society, and this public education should begin at an early age and continue throughout the students' lives. The school curriculum needs to be expanded to include more cultural studies, and the educational system must be open enough to address the changing information needs in different communities.

Focus group participants stressed the need for continuous public education about the importance of immigrants to Canadian society, the need for their successful integration into the fabric of the country, and cultural sensitivity to changing demographics.

Role of the Police:

The role played by the police is critical in effectively dealing with partner violence. Therefore, immigrant and visible minority women need to be able to access police services and they must be treated with fairness and respect when they come forward. As one focus group participant stated, "currently, immigrant and visible minority women do not feel comfortable calling the police." The police force needs more sensitivity training and more training in cultural issues in order to be effective in this area. The training should be aimed at changing negative attitudes and stereotypes to improve police practices so that good working relationships with immigrant and ethno-cultural communities can be developed.

There is also a critical need for members of different ethnic communities to become part of the police forces across the country. In one city, an attempt to increase the ethnic diversity of its police force failed as a result of high turnover among the minorities recruited because they saw little hope for advancement in their careers. Specific and realistic policies need to be developed for appropriate and successful ways of recruiting and maintaining a police force that is reflective of the community it serves.

For the police to serve immigrant and visible minority women who have experienced partner violence, response teams must include male and female staff. As well, if victims are not proficient in English or French, an independent interpreter should be available to facilitate communications with the victim. Police forces should also be better informed about the available community resources to deal with follow-up in such cases.

Frontline workers also suggested that police charging policies need to be re-examined to ensure that they do not unfairly charge women who are victims of partner violence. As indicated earlier, "counter-charging" was reported to be a problem in all seven cities included in this study. Detailed and independent investigations of reports of partner abuse should be conducted before any victims are counter-charged. Police should also develop targeted programs to educate ethno-cultural communities about the police services and encourage women who have experienced partner violence to seek their help.

Access to Justice:

For most immigrant and visible minority women, legal aid is the only way they can obtain legal representation in their battle against partner abuse. Frontline workers suggested that legal aid services need to be made available to these women, and the services must cover the length of the court proceedings. In such cases, legal aid should cover translation services as well as adequate consultation time with their lawyer.

Ethno-cultural organizations can also provide an excellent source of expertise for developing culturally appropriate training programs for legal aid officers and other justice officials. These organizations have the potential to provide cultural interpretation and translation services, as well as help develop culturally appropriate policies and implementation strategies for use in the courts.

The representation of immigrants and visible minorities in the justice system also needs to be improved in order to better reflect their representation in the community and society generally. If

abused immigrant and visible minority women see members of their own community as lawyers, judges and legal aid officers, it would help to facilitate a sense of trust and faith in the justice system. To do so, more aggressive strategies to recruit individuals from ethnic communities to join the justice system must be developed and implemented. Focus group participants also stressed the need for policies and practices to ensure that visible minority employees obtain equal opportunities for training and professional development.

Social Services:

The social services available to immigrant and visible minority women who have experienced abuse are a vital resource and they have been referred to as the women's "lifeline." However, in order to maintain and improve these important social services, there is a need to recognize their important support roles and revamp funding procedures for these organizations, supplement the training of their frontline workers and develop an ethnically representative workforce, provide interpretation services, and encourage collaboration among different agencies.

To operate efficiently and effectively, social service agencies need to obtain core funding that is sustainable and allows some flexibility in its use. This would enable the agencies to conduct short- and long-term planning of their programs to address the changing needs of their clientele. Many immigrant and visible minority women who have experienced partner violence look to social service agencies to provide a range of services for their needs. These include legal and financial services, safety information, help with employment, counselling and healthcare services, and childcare. Adequate core funding is also necessary for these service agencies to be able to obtain and retain their skilled frontline workers.

For immigrant and visible minority women, one of the most critical needs is for translation and interpretation services. Social service agencies require resources to provide translation of their own materials and services, as well as to assist other institutions in the justice, healthcare and immigration sectors which deal with immigrant and visible minority women. Having access to adequate translation and interpretation services would facilitate communications between frontline service staff and their clients, and would help reduce the women's anxiety about reaching out for assistance.

As was suggested with the police and justice systems, it is also important that the workforce of social service agencies be ethnically diverse to reflect the communities they serve. To achieve this, recruitment and hiring policies that target visible minority professionals will be needed. Focus group participants said it is not enough to have community members serve only as volunteers; they need to be recruited into paid positions as well. Agencies also need to ensure that their workforce receives cultural sensitivity training to enable them to better understand and serve their immigrant and visible minority clientele. Such training would also increase the faith and trust that their clients have in the agency's services.

Focus group participants also called for a coordinated effort among service agencies, to enable them to maximize the resources available and provide more comprehensive services to immigrant and visible minority women. Through better coordination of efforts, agencies would

be able to develop networks for support mechanisms, conduct advocacy, develop credibility and increase the recognition of their role as "life supports" for their clientele.

Community and Ethnic Organizations:
Community and ethnic organizations represent an enormous potential source of skilled workers that has been underutilized. And despite the critical role these agencies play in providing social services and supports for immigrant and visible minority women who experience abuse, they are seriously under-funded. Focus group participants reported that there is an urgent need for adequate, sustainable core funding for these agencies, and for funding which allows some flexibility in its use. This would provide the necessary resources for community and ethnic organizations to target their programs to fit the changing needs of their clientele. Frontline workers also suggested that mainstream service agencies, legal aid, police forces and the justice system need to develop formal partnerships with these ethnocultural organizations to better use these human resources and the service supports they can provide.

Employment Equity:
Focus group participants also identified employment supports as an important component when assisting immigrant and visible minority women who have experienced partner abuse. They recommended the use of progressive employment equity policies – such as programs in workplaces to recruit and maintain a culturally diverse workforce – to provide opportunities for immigrant and visible minority women to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and give them an opportunity to gain Canadian work experience.

Discussion of the Findings

Immigrant and visible minority women who experience partner violence are faced with a complex situation, so their needs must be addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. In addition to concerns shared by all abused women – such as concerns for physical safety and security, for example – immigrant and visible minority women also find themselves burdened by issues involving their immigration status and by cultural, financial, linguistic, and legal constraints. Systemic barriers further compound their plight, as they encounter problems caused by stereotyping, racial discrimination, social isolation and marginalization. Evidence from the research literature and observations from frontline workers clearly demonstrate that the intersection of these social, cultural and systemic barriers are crucial to understanding – and addressing – the problems faced by immigrant and visible minority women who experience partner abuse.

While immigrant and visible minority women who experience partner abuse reach out to both formal and informal sources of help, empirical evidence and the experiences of our focus group participants indicate that these women are the least likely to report the abuse to the police and the least likely to use the social services that are available. In order to reach this group of women, culturally appropriate assessment and intervention programs must be in place, and the women must be aware of the services and agencies that can offer help. To be effective, culturally

appropriate assessments and interventions must take a holistic approach which considers the woman's immigration status, her ethnic background, level of acculturation, proficiency in English or French, her economic status, and prior exposure to violence.

Both the research literature and our focus group participants emphasize that the long-term goal of addressing partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women should include prevention strategies as well support systems for the victims. A key component of any prevention strategy must be public education about the effects of partner violence on the children and family, and the long-term health, social and financial costs to society. A coordinated approach to delivering support services and strong linkages among service providers are also essential components of any long-tem strategy to address this problem.

Next Steps

The findings from this study point to several key issues that require serious consideration for policy action. Progressive policies and action strategies need to be developed in such areas as employment equity, subsidized housing and stable funding for ethno-cultural service and settlement agencies. These policies would potentially enhance the integration of immigrants into the labour force, reduce their feelings of isolation and marginalization, and improve their trust in public institutions and sense of belonging in the larger society.

A gender analysis was also called for, in order to assess the differing impacts of current and proposed policies, programs and legislation on men and women. In particular, a gender analysis of the provision of legal aid, the dual-charging policy used by some law enforcement agencies, and custody and access orders issued by the courts is needed. Such an analysis would also help identify the specific needs and vulnerabilities of immigrant and visible minority women.

Focus group participants indicated that feelings of hostility, discrimination, isolation and marginalization experienced by immigrant and visible minority women are the direct result of cultural stereotyping. To address this problem, a comprehensive public education strategy would be useful to help educate mainstream society about new immigrants to Canada, their important role in the country's development, and their potential contributions to the well-being of all Canadians. By helping to promote a change in attitude towards new immigrants, an effective public education strategy might also improve the chances of new immigrants successfully integrating into society.

Another key issue identified was the need to develop a network of frontline workers and agencies to help facilitate ongoing collaboration. This could provide a mechanism for sharing information and thus enhancing knowledge about the nature and causes of partner violence against immigrant and visible minority women. A frontline network could also promote an effective use of resources, help ensure that victims have access to relevant and appropriate services, and help promote best practices in this area.

A key task for such a network would be the development of a national protocol to provide sustainable, long-term solutions to many of the current and emerging issues Major components of a national protocol should include:

- Lists of current resources and links, to highlight promising ideas on relevant issues;
- Examples of best practice models and programs in such areas as community outreach, legal representation, and counselling services;
- Guidelines and strategies to encourage other collaborative networks and help improve cooperation and coordination among services and programs, particularly among mainstream, settlement and ethno-cultural agencies.

Conclusion

Immigrant and visible minority women who experience partner violence face a complex situation, so their needs must be addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated way. Their situation can be complicated by social, cultural, financial, linguistic, legal or immigration concerns, and these issues can be further compounded by systemic barriers like cultural stereotyping, racial discrimination, and economic marginalization. Government cutbacks that affect the provision of support services further complicate the situation.

Evidence from the research literature and observations from frontline workers in our focus groups clearly show that the intersection of these social, cultural and systemic barriers has a profound influence on immigrant and visible minority women who experience partner abuse and on their ability to obtain relevant and appropriate help. In order to help them successfully overcome this problem, changes and improvements are needed in many areas. Some of those changes will certainly require funds – for example, for improved training or the establishment of a needed service – while others simply require the political and societal will to do so.

Further Research

The availability of empirical data is always a challenge when examining issues related to immigrants and visible minority groups. It is even more challenging when the issue in question concerns partner violence among these ethnic communities. The first-ever Ethnic Diversity Survey was conducted by Statistics Canada in 2002 and was offered in nine ethnic languages, in addition to English and French. Other surveys, such as the one on victimization, will need to be similarly adapted to make them more representative and more inclusive of Canada's evolving population. This can be achieved by incorporating strategies such as over-sampling of immigrant and visible minority groups and conducting the surveys in ethnic languages.

This current project is one more step along the way to better understanding the context in which immigrant and visible minority women experience partner violence. Many more questions remain to be answered, such as how demographic and cultural factors interact with systemic factors, but current limitations of the empirical data used in this study do not permit such an

analysis. As more representative and inclusive empirical data become available, it will allow detailed bi-variate and multi-variate analyses to be done. And this knowledge is essential in the development of effective policies and programs to address the problem of partner violence among immigrant and visible minority women.

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Appendix 1: Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. Can you describe the needs, fears and other emotions of women who come to you for help with the problem of partner violence?

2. What would you say are their greatest hopes?

3. What factors do you believe place immigrant, refugee or visible minority women at risk of partner abuse?

4. What factors do you believe put immigrant, refugee and visible minority men at risk of abusing their partners?

5. What are the greatest barriers that interfere with or prevent these women from leaving the abusive situations? Are there elements of structural oppression (discrimination) experienced by immigrant, refugee and visible minority women who experience abuse?

6. What are the trends of violence against immigrant, refugee and visible minority women (that is, are they increasing or decreasing? Is there more reporting / less reporting?).

7. How would you describe the attitudes of immigrant group associations/ community groups towards partner violence? What kinds of support do women receive from their ethnic community groups?

8. What are the major problems you face in trying to help these women? What resources do you need to address these problems?

9. What role should government institutions play to help address the problem of partner violence among immigrant, refugee and visible minority groups (such as roles for the courts, police, immigration, etc.)?

10. Please comment on the following as they relate to immigrant, refugee and visible minority women who experience abuse: early intervention; prosecution of cases; support and advocacy for victims; coordination between sectors.

11. What specific actions would you recommend be taken to ensure that victims receive support and access to services? As well, do you have any suggestions for proactive policies and practices aimed at preventing partner abuse?

12. What can be done to promote services that are responsive to the needs of immigrant and visible minority women who experience abuse?

13. Are there any other related issues you would like to address?

Appendix 2: Focus Group Participants and Their Organizations, by City

Ottawa				
Organization	Mission	Services	Contact	Clients Served
Women's Place/ Place aux Femmes	To provide choice, advocacy & information for women.	Information & referral Drop-in centre Fax tree to connect service providers with each other	Community Worker	Women in the Ottawa area
Carlington Community Education Health Services	To provide services focused on a broad definition of health to all people without regard for age, gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. A recognition that women need services.	Health promotion Help for newcomers Employment services Parent/ child groups Parent counselling Well-baby choices Medical services Nutritional counselling Somali women's support Information line	Multicultural Social Worker	Refugee claimants, refugees, immigrants, visitors, people with no status
Family Services/ Services a la Famille d'Ottawa	To provide family counselling & support services to the Ottawa community. Among different programs, a wide variety of services are offered.	Advocacy, housing, legal, financial, & support services to women & families; Counselling, referral, information; Services to women & children – child witness groups, separation & divorce groups Forth's Specific Project: to provide group services to culturally diverse communities based on the concurrent groups for children who have witnessed women abuse; model developed by FS Centre Ottawa.	Ethno-racial Cultural Coordinator – Project C.A.U.S.E. (a program of the anti-violence program)	All women (ethno-diverse communities, Aboriginal, Metis, Inuit, etc.)
Interval House of Ottawa-Carleton	To provide safe shelter for women & children fleeing family violence. To advocate for services needed by abused women &	To provide advocacy, support services, safe emergency housing, specific services for children in order to support them to live their lives free from	Children's counsellor	All women (ethno-diverse communities, Aboriginal, Metis, Inuit, etc.)

	children in order to live a life free from violence.	violence		
Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa	To provide services & support to women of all ages who are or have been at risk of coming into conflict with the law.	Transitional supportive housing program; Counselling – group & individual; Shop-lifting prevention programs; Anger Solutions Program; Outreach to sex-trade workers; Advocacy; Public education; In-reach services/discharge planning for women in custody; Eviction prevention; Aftercare ("Jane" school)	Coordinator of Residential Programs	Aboriginal, Canadian, African, Indian, Asian, Middle Eastern, Barbados & Caribbean women. There are a large number of women who are in custody as refugees & illegal immigrants. Serve about 800 women per year.
Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa (con't)		Volunteer programs – court support, visiting detention centre, housing support, fundraising, special events, driving, administration, educational opportunities	Volunteer Coordinator	global, about 800
Self-employed		Community-based research Cross-cultural counselling Women's health issues Facilitation & training	Social Worker/ Consultant	
Winnipeg				
Centre for War Affected Families	To facilitate healing, resiliency & full participation in Canadian society for families now living in Manitoba who have been affected by war in their countries of origin.	Counselling for individuals, families, children, adults; Programs for women, preschool & school-aged children; Consultation & service to schools & other service providers; Awareness & training	Program Director	Individuals, families & children from refugee backgrounds, primarily from countries recently affected by war – currently Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Congo, Iraq & Sudan. Working with approximately 70 families for counselling, 40 children in activity-based programs & 18 women in

		around the issues for war-affected families; ESL classes for isolated women		ESL classes.
Women in Second Stage Housing	To provide a safe place for women & children who have left abusive relationships. To give clients time to heal physically & emotionally.	Residential second-stage housing program for abused women	Executive Director	Women with their children; some immigrants or refugees
Women in Second Stage Housing (con't)		Temporary housing (independent living) for up to 1 year to women & children who are victims of domestic violence; Counselling for women & children; Group therapy for women & children; Advocacy & support; Literacy upgrading classes	Program Coordinator	Predominantly Native Canadians, as well as ethnic clients. We have 11 suites for families.
Immigrant Women's Counselling Services	To stop violence against women in the immigrant & refugee community.	Counselling (short- & long-term) for abused women; Public education; Volunteer training & placement	Social Worker/ Counsellor	All ethnic groups are served & all people who are immigrants or refugees in Manitoba.
Immigrant Women's Counselling Services (con't)	To provide cross-cultural, sensitive counselling to immigrant women who were or are living in domestic violence.	Support; Counselling; Groups; Referrals; Advocacy; Education regarding family law, women's rights, cycle of violence, resources available & other issues as requested by the clients.	Senior Counsellor	Refugees, immigrants & landed-immigrants; women sponsored by husbands; visitors; students; & women from every continent.
Hope Centre Health Care	To provide holistic health care to the surrounding community (Northern end of Winnipeg).	Medical services; Counselling services; Community outreach; Education, advocacy & support.	Community Outreach Worker	A majority are Aboriginal or Métis, low-income or social assistance recipients.
Sexuality Education Resource	Promoting healthy sexuality through education.	Immigrant Refugee Health Program (interpretation	Special Projects Coordinator	A mix of immigrants & refugees. Spanish, Chinese & other languages (Kurdish,

Centre (SERC)		services for reproductive health issues, community education & development); Facts of Life Program – phone, talking yellow pages & internet information & referral service; Women's Action Against Violence Project for immigrant & refugee women; Community & professional education.		Arabic, & Vietnamese) for interpretation services.
International Centre	An immigrant serving agency dedicated to providing a comprehensive range of services & programs that support & facilitate the integration of immigrants to Winnipeg.	Settlement & integration support services; Language bank & volunteer services; Employment services; Adult education; Outreach; Nutritional services.	Outreach Liaison Officer	200 to 300 per year
The Family Centre	To bring programs, partnerships and resources together to empower individuals and strengthen families. Its goal is to create healthy families and strong communities.	Counselling and community Services; In-home Family Support and Family Education; Special Needs; Family Child Care, Information, Referral, and Education; Employee Assistance; Early Childhood Resource Centre; Families and Schools Together; and Family Preservation.	Counsellor	Individual, families, couples and groups of different ethnic groups
Toronto				
OASIS Centre des Femmes	To provide services for French-speaking women (victims of violence or not).	Counselling; Accompaniment; Therapy; Prevention in schools; Job program; Social & community groups.	Transitional Support Worker	French-speaking women from everywhere.
Japanese Social Services	To provide various social services to	Various referral services;	Volunteer, MSW	Japanese-speaking individuals, Japanese &

	Japanese & Japanese-Canadian communities.	Support groups for Japanese mothers; Support for students & individuals not working (e.g. holiday visa); Various seminars (immigration, Canadian systems, etc.); Community service (parenting, employment, etc.)		Japanese-Canadians.
North York Women's Centre	To provide women with the resources & tools that will enhance their quality of life. To address women's issues & the oppressions faced in society. To act as a support system to all women despite race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.	Information & referral to other social services in & out of the GTA; Provide a variety of support groups to women in the North York area; Legal clinic Tuesday evenings.	Student at NYWC Program Facilitator for Immigrant Women's Program	Our clients come from all walks of life. Many women do represent various ethnicities.
Tamil Eelam Society of Canada	To assist immigrants with their settlement needs & help them integrate with the society as smoothly as possible.	Settlement services – immigration, legal aid, housing, welfare, education, job search, orientation, workshops, information sessions; Language training – ESL/LINC classes with computer-assisted training & on-site childcare facilities; Job search – workshops, matching clients with employers, preparation of resumes; Women's programs – workshops, sewing classes, parenting sessions.	Program Manager/ A/Executive Director	Anyone who walks through our doors. Our clientele presently includes women & men speaking 12 different languages, although most are Tamils. Immigrant status – landed immigrants & refugees Size – in a month, we provide over 1,000 clients with different services.
Education Wife Assault	To prevent woman abuse & children's exposure to violence	Training; Public information; Web site;	Coordinator – Immigrant Women's	We are not a client service organization but an information, education &

	through prevention, information, education & community capacity building.	Multi-lingual materials to diverse communities.	Program	training institute.
Eritrean Canadian Community of Metropolitan Toronto	CIC – Community Information Centre SIWA – Somali… Eritrean Canadian Centre all work together	Advocacy; Information; Referral; Housing; Helping immigrants & old refugees; Interpretation & translation; Women & youth program; Homework club (tutoring).	Settlement Outreach Worker	Immigrants & refugees, youth, seniors, women, & all Eritrean people who need help.
Korean Canadian Women's Association	To empower Korean-Canadian women, especially those who are the victims of violence & to provide Korean Canadian people with information for settlement.	Family services, mostly for the Korean-Canadian abused women & their children; Settlement services.	Executive Director	Korean-Canadian, landed immigrants & citizens, refugee & refugee claimants
Vancouver				
MOSAIC	MOSAIC is dedicated to addressing issues that affect immigrants & refugees in the course of their settlement & integration into Canadian society. MOSAIC's mandate is to support & empower immigrant & refugee communities, helping them to address critical issues in their neighbourhoods & workplaces.	Settlement services – information, counselling, form filling, advocacy, group presentations (topics on settlement); Employment services; Language training; Interpretation & translation; Paralegal advocacy; Family programs.	Bilingual Counsellor (Chinese)	Chinese community (but not limited to Chinese; if the client speaks English, I can help them). Mainly new immigrants but also include long-term residents who have limited English & those who have no status (e.g. refugee claimants, visitors, overseas students).
MOSAIC (con't)		Settlement & integration services; Language training; Employment training; Family counselling;	Director of Family Programs	Primarily serve men who are offenders of violence against women in the immigrant communities.

		Interpreting & translation.		
MOSAIC (con't)	Serving newcomers, immigrants & refugees	Settlement services; Language training; Family programs; Interpretation & translation.	Women's Support Worker, Coordinator – Family Violence Program	African, Somali, Vietnamese, Latin American, Arabic, Persian. Over 60 languages served.
MOSAIC & South Asian Women's Centre	MOSAIC: Integration & settlement SAWS: Support South Asian Women	Family support; Supporting women who have experienced partner violence	Stopping the Violence Counsellor	South Asian, landed immigrants, refugees, 30 per month.
Community Representative (South Asian)			Stopping the Violence Counsellor	
Vancouver Custody and Access Support and Advocacy Association (VCASAA)	Custody & access, support & advocacy	Workshops for advocates & service providers; Policy analysis; Resource development; Help facilitate custody &access support groups through frontline organizations.	Coordinator	Women, particularly those who have been marginalized by race, immigration status, sexuality, age or disability.
Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Services Society	Serving multicultural women & their families who are facing domestic violence. Bi-lingual & bi-cultural services	24 languages; Bi-lingual & bi-cultural; Advocacy & support; Individual & group counselling; Children who witness violence program; Volunteer program.	Family & Sexual Violence Program Worker	Minority women & their children.
West Coast Domestic Workers Association	To provide free legal advice to domestic workers who come to Canada under the Living Caregiver Program	Free legal advice; Educational workshops; ESL program for domestic workers.	Community & Resource Developer	Domestic workers & living caregivers in BC.
Halifax				
New Start Counselling	Counselling & education for men who have abused their partners, & counselling for their partners.	Counselling; Group work; Advocacy; Workshops; Education & info sessions.	Women's Counsellor	Partners of men who abuse
Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association	Support for immigrants & government-assisted refugees.	Support & education for families about violence.	Family Violence Program Coordinator	Immigrants

(MISA)				
MISA (con't)		Crisis/outreach; Settlement; Host; Employment; Business.	Outreach & Crisis Worker	Immigrants
IWK Health Centre	Maritime women & children being the healthiest in the world.	Health care for women, children & pregnant women.	Social Worker	Pregnant women (5,000 per year), women's health, paediatric health
Avalon Sexual Assault Centre		Counselling; Therapy/ support groups; Education; Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE); Info. & referral; After-hours response line; Advocacy; Research projects.	Executive Director	Do not keep stats on clients served
North End Community Health Centre	To promote health & wellness, health service provision & advocacy.	Medical & nursing care, nurse practitioner, dietician services, mental health, foot care clinic & health interpreter (Vietnamese)	Staff Nurse	Multicultural clientele (e.g. African, Nova Scotian, Vietnamese, Somali, First Nations, Iraqi, Afghani, etc.)
New Start Counselling	Provide counselling & education for men who have been abusive to their partners & supportive counselling for those women.	Counselling; Workshops; Advocacy.	Coordinator	Many men are mandated through the court system, others come voluntarily. 5% immigrant status.
Coverdale Centre	To treat every woman entering the justice system with dignity, respect & a non-judgmental relationship & assistance.	Counselling, referral, information, support, advocacy, programming, counselling incarcerated women, outreach & pre-release counselling.	Social Worker/ Program Coordinator and Volunteer	All women who experience the justice system.
Halifax Regional Police, Victim Services	To provide support, intervention & advocacy for victims of crime (primarily domestic violence victims).	Short-term counselling; Referrals to community resources (housing, social assistance, transition houses); Court	Counsellor	Broad-based client population; approximately 270-300/month, diverse ethnic backgrounds, primarily women.

		accompaniment; On-scene response for victims; Advocacy; Telephone support; Crisis intervention.		
Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre	To provide ESL instruction to newcomers.	English as a second language instruction, computer training.	ESL Instructor	70+ landed immigrants & convention refugees of all ethnic backgrounds.
YMCA Newcomers Program	Help immigrants settle in the new country & new life.	School support work (school-aged); Community involvement program (aged 14-21); Host program.	Program Supervisor, Individual Match	200+ immigrants (any class of immigration) served.
YWCA Halifax	Enriching the lives of women & those whose lives we touch.	Women's residence/ short-stay accommodation; Child care; On-site women's health clinic; Wellness fitness programs; Women's health information resource centre.	Executive Director	Women – particularly those living on low-incomes and/or those who are socially/economically disadvantaged.
Nova Scotia Hospital	Provide mental health treatment for people experiencing psychiatric illness.	In-patient & out-patient treatment	Social Worker	General population
Bryony House	Provides a 24-bed shelter to abused women & their children.	24 bed shelter; 24-hour distress line; Supportive individual counselling; Group counselling; Referral information.	Director	Average over 400 admissions of women & children Serve Halifax regional Municipality
Metro Regional Housing Authority	To provide affordable housing	5,000 public housing units for families & seniors; Community resource centres; Residents' associations.	Social Worker	All low-income families & seniors.
Montreal				
Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et immigration (Montréal)			Conseillère, dossier jeunes minorités visibles et soutien à la participation civique	Quartier Rosemont-Patrie, plusieurs ONG Femmes

Le Refuge pour les femmes de l'Ouest de l'île	soutien la violence conjugale	hébergement pour les femmes et leur enfants. Suivi pour les femmes hébergés 3 fois/semaine. Suivi pour les ex-récidentes et pour les femmes de l'extérieur qui vivent la violence conjugale. ligne de crise, écoute 24h sur 24h. Suivi pour les enfants, etc.	Intervenante à l'hébergement	60/100
Centre d'études et de développement interculturel (CEDI)	Auparavent appelé Amitié chinoise. Leur mission est de mettre au service de la communauté asiatique des appuits relatifs à l'intégration des asiatiques à Montréal.	Loue de franchisation, acceuil de nouveaux immigrants et aide des personnes du 3e âge.	Chargé de projet	804 à 1400 personnes
SANQI	Aider les immigrants (réfugiés en attente de status et résident permanent) à intégrer le marché du travail	service d'aide à l'emploi (SAE) Projet SIT (soutien Intégration au Travail) CAMO (Projet immersion prof.) Projet d'accès rapide à l'ordre des ingénieur	Conseillère en emploi	Tous les groupes Ethniques
Mouvement Fraternité Multi-Éthnique Inc.	Contribuer à l'amélioration des conditions de vie, des individus et familles issus des communautés culturelles, en particulier les membres des minorités visibles	d'éducation de sensibilisation, comptoir de dépannage alimentaire, centre d'accès interne, activités semi-culturelles, aide aux devoirs.	Directeur	arabes, latino-américains,
PROMIS	Aide aux nouveaux arrivants et aux immigrants	Emploi, régionalisation, soutien aux familles, bénévolat, accueil et établissement, halte-garderie, Franchisation	Responsable soutien aux familles et bénévolat	Nouveax arrivants et immigrants de toutes origines. Environ 10 000 personnes par année.
Barrow Institute of Community Leadership	Encourage the full development of women & girls, teach on the CEDAW &	Listening, referral & popular education around cultural, social, political & legal issues	Coordinator	All women – mostly from ethno-cultural communities & more specifically African Canadians

	Platform for Action, women's rights as human rights.			
South Asian Women's Community Centre	Support to South Asian women in their settlement in Quebec & Canada. Provide economic development & develop their potential.	English & French classes; Job development training; Social support to women who are lonely & isolated; Legal & social service; Support to victims of violence (family violence); Family counselling.	Coordinator	South Asian families from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh & Sri Lanka
Alliance of South Asian Communities	Provide services to South Asian communities, educational facilities, employment	Computer courses, language courses, immigration services, housing problems, mediation between tenant & landlords, free tax services for 65+	Executive Director, Professional Accountant	Majority South Asian people
Immigrant Workers' Centre	To provide awareness of workers' rights, to serve as a meeting place for different workers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, to serve as a link between union organizing & community work.	Referrals to other groups with expertise on particular problems; Advocacy & accompaniment to institutions such as Norms du Travail, labour court, etc.; Educational programs on labour laws.	Coordinator	Filipinos, South Asians, Africans, Caribbean, Haitians, Latin Americans, on average 500+ per year
PINAY	Advocate, promote & empower Filipino women to fight for their rights & welfare as immigrants & migrant workers	Education, discussion, workshops, forums & training relating to women's issues; Referrals to available resources, assistance on specific issues related to their problems or difficulties.	Nurse	Migrant workers of different ethnic groups around Cote de Neige but most particularly in the Filipino community.
Minority Rights Association of Greater Chateauguay	Provide minority representation, promote equity programs, provide anti-racist education, defence of minority rights,	Support to victims of racial discrimination, harassment & violence; Information sessions/ training; Policy development.	Director	Visible & ethnic minorities, including Aboriginal community & immigrants.

	race/intercultural relations.			
Calgary				
Jewish Family Service of Calgary	To serve the needs of the Calgary community working from a foundation of Jewish beliefs & values (to heal the world)	Clinical counselling (all people in larger community); Resettlement, vocational immigrants – primarily Jewish from Russia, Israel, Argentina, Ethiopia; Working with seniors – outreach for frail seniors, service in seniors homes; Second Wind Dreams program; Family life education.	Clinical Supervisor	People of all faiths, ethnicity. Emphasis on Jewish persons in Calgary. Work with new arrivals & on-going from Russia, Israel, Argentina, Ethiopia
YWCA Family Violence Prevention Centre & Sheriff King Home		Crisis, individual & group counselling; shelter facilities (women & children only); Services for children – individual & group; Services for men – individual & group; Outreach services for women; Visitation centre to open in Nov. 2002.	Family Violence & Multicultural Counsellor	All refugees, visitors & landed immigrants Services provided in first language through interpreters, referrals, culturally sensitive/cross culture in English
Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	Meet clients needs. Try to provide the best services & create good society by educating people about their rights & responsibilities	Community development, parent counselling, employment, ESL.	Outreach Worker	All kinds of clients (newcomers from 0-3 years)
Awotaan Native Women's Shelter	Provide women & children a safe place to stay & all the supports they need to work through issues of family violence while moving into a safe lifestyle	24-hour crisis line; 27 beds; 21 day residential program/ intakes, support/ advocate/ referrals; Child support/ support for parents, summer camps, outreach programs, Christmas party fund, healing circles, community liaison program, child	Aboriginal Cultural Advisor	Aboriginals, immigrants & physically challenged.

		support in schools, volunteer program donations, fundraising, staff support, counselling, advocacy, elders program, spiritual guidance, etc.		
Sunrise Community Link Resource Centre	People connecting people.	Intake work to connect clients to basic needs services, advocacy, parenting support & short- & long-term counselling. Volunteer program. Public education & community development on domestic violence in Forest Lawn, Dover, West Dover.	Community Animator and Intake Worker / Support Worker	Aboriginal, immigrant & low-income clients, mostly women, about 50 clients per day. Provide services to diverse population, people from various cultures & countries All immigrant status – Canadian citizens, new arrived families, refugees Serve about 80,000 people in the Sunrise community
Home Front	To reduce domestic violence through coordinated community efforts. Increase victim safety, offender accountability, increase accessibility for diverse populations.	Court case workers complete & intake (risk assessment) with every victim whose partner or other offender is coming through the domestic violence court room. Case workers provide resources & referrals, a voice for the victim throughout the court process. Home Front is also involved in other community efforts & advocacy.	Program Coordinator / Caseworker	Diverse populations, immigrant status varies, approximately 100 cases coming through the court per week (not all new cases).
Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society	We believe individuals can live in safe & respectful relationships. (Currently rewriting the mission statement)	Long-term shelter (6 months) to women with children who have experienced family violence; Community-based counselling for individuals who live in/ have left abusive relationships; individuals who chose to use abusive behaviour; & child witnesses up to 17 years; Group, individual	Research Specialist, Program Evaluator	All ethnicities – Aboriginal, Asian, Mexican, Middle Eastern, European, etc. All status – Visitor, landed immigrant, citizen 25 families in shelter, 600+ community-based clients

		sessions for both residents & clients		
Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary	To work with women & girls who have been or are at risk of coming into conflict with the law to ensure humane treatment & monitor & promote improvements to the criminal justice system when & wherever possible.	Court (youth & adult) – provide information on the court process to ensure people understand it before entering a plea; One-to-one support for women who are involved in the legal system in any way (accused, victim, divorce, child welfare); TLC – formerly shoplifting intervention program – group & one-to-one, men & women to get back to root of the behaviour; Life skills, healing for women in conflict or at risk	Court / Community Liaison Worker	Includes all races, almost 10,000 clients TLC – have to be able to read & speak English Strive for diversity in court work volunteers

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- **tax receipt** for a major portion of your fee
- **password-access to the Members' Lounge** on our award-winning website

CCSD Membership Form

☐ **Yes!** I'd like to join the CCSD **today** and help to support quality research and publications.

Enclosed is my membership fee:
(Please see over for full details and other fee options)

- ☐ $ 25 Student Member
- ☐ $ 55 Senior Member
- ☐ $ 65 Individual Member
- ☐ $ 100 Individual Services Plus Member
- ☐ $ 100 Organizational Member
- ☐ $ 250 Organizational Patron Member
- ☐ $ 500 Organizational Supporting Member
- ☐ Other $ _____

I'd also like to make a donation of:

- ☐ $35 ☐ $100
- ☐ $50 ☐ Other $ _____

TOTAL (membership + donation) $_____

Payment:

☐ My cheque payable to CCSD is enclosed OR

☐ I prefer to use my credit card:

☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA

Card number: _____

Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Charitable registration number 11921 8923 RR0001

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone number: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

CCSD ◆ 309 Cooper St., 5th floor, Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5 ◆ Phone 613-236-8977 ◆ Fax 613-236-2750 ◆ www.ccsd.ca

CCSD MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Individual Members: The CCSD membership package for individuals offers accessible, informative, useful resources as well as representation on social policy at a national level.
Organizational Members: Organizations can select the membership package that best suits their needs for information services, publications, and access to database information.

Membership Services		Individuals		Organizations			
		Member: $65 Seniors: $55 Students: $25	Services Plus Member: $100	Organizational Member: $100	Patron Member: $250	Supporting Member: $500	Sustaining Member: $1,000
Publications	• *Perception*, a national periodical on social development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	• 15% discount on all CCSD publications	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	• a complimentary copy of new CCSD publications and reports					✓	✓
	• 20% discount on orders of CCSD publications					✓	✓
Information Services	• quarterly information packages outlining CCSD activities, research highlights and new publications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	• immediate communication of all CCSD media releases, executive summaries and policy papers		✓		✓	✓	✓
	• exclusive access to the Members Lounge on CCSD's website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	• access to research services and databases+						✓
Advertising	• free 1/4 page advertisement in *Perception*						✓
	• Internet posting of relevant events and resources on the CCSD's award-winning website*					✓	✓
	• publication in *Perception* of member events in the social policy field*		✓		✓	✓	✓
Other	• special acknowledgement listing in Annual Report			✓	✓	✓	✓
	• voting privileges at the annual general meeting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	• a tax receipt for a portion of your fee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New!	Two-year memberships provide convenience and savings! Now you can join the CCSD or renew your membership for two years and we will give you a 10% discount. The CCSD also offers special membership rates for municipalities. Call the office at (613) 236-8977 for more information.						

* Subject to CCSD editorial approval
+ Includes research design assistance, access to library searches (CCSD library and Internet), poverty updates and census tract data

Your participation in the CCSD is valued at any cost. If you cannot afford the full fee, please contribute what you can.

Nowhere to Turn?

Immigrant and visible minority women in Canada who experience violence in their relationships can find themselves between a rock and a hard place. As bad as the abuse may be, they face even bigger challenges trying to deal with the social service systems and judicial structures that are supposed to help them.

Using evidence from a literature review, an analysis of relevant data, and detailed observations from focus group discussions in cities across Canada, this report highlights the importance of social, cultural and systemic barriers that hinder immigrant and visible minority women from seeking and obtaining the supports they need.

Canadian Council on Social Development

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) is one of Canada's most authoritative voices promoting better social and economic security for all Canadians. A national, self-supporting organization, the CCSD's main product is information and its main activity is research, focusing on concerns such as child well-being, economic security, employment, poverty, cultural diversity, and government social policies.

The Council serves concerned citizens, labour, business, government and social service agencies. As a recognized authority on social and economic issues, the CCSD is widely cited by the media, scholars and decision-makers across the country.

Department of Justice Canada | Ministère de la Justice Canada

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Additional copies of ***Nowhere to Turn?*** are available for $20, plus taxes and handling charges as applicable. A discount of 15% is available on bulk purchases of 25 copies or more. CCSD member discounts also apply.

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